continue as a great leader of nations, we must
reassess our moral convictions and strengthen our
moral foundations.

Thank you.
CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Bruce Barron. I
understand Mr. Barron is not present.
Walt Barbee.
Jay Dee Hanson.
MR. HANSON: I'm here.
CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good.
MR. HANSON: Good afternoon. I'm pleased
to present the position of the United Methodist
General Board of Church and Society, the National
Social Concerns Agency of the United Methodist Church.
We're pleased the Commission is holding
hearings on this most important issue.
I might stop just for a second. There has
been some discussion already about there being
religious issues and there being economic issues. An
essential element of protestant thought is you don't
divide life into religious sectors and secular
sectors.
Gambling is a menace to business integrity. It breeds crime, and it is destructive of the interests of good government. The nation must rise in spiritual might in order to end this rapidly growing evil.

These words might well be spoken about the rise of gambling in the U.S. today. They come from a statement on public morals passed by the 1940 General Conference of the Methodist Church and reflect the historic opposition of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations to gambling.

Gambling has consistently been one of the issues acted upon by the church's agencies dealing with public morals. Clearly the U.S. has not risen in spiritual might to end gambling. Indeed, gambling is growing, and nearly every state has some form of state sponsored gambling.

Instead of using its might to fight gambling, the state has promoted gambling. Instead of protecting its citizens from those that would prey upon them, the state is promoting gambling as a revenue source.
In 1964, New Hampshire adopted the first state lottery. Since then states have promoted gambling as a legitimate mainstream leisure activity and revenue source. By 1992, gross gambling revenues for government and gaming establishments were more than six times what U.S. people spent on movies.

United Methodists oppose all forms of gambling. Our 68 annual conferences in the U.S. have worked hard to limit gambling. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, the highest public policy document for United Methodists, state that gambling is a menace to society, deadly to the best interests of moral, social, and economic life.

The Bible does not include explicit prohibitions against gambling, but gambling is one of the ways we place other things above God.

We are also called to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are not loving our neighbor when we permit practices which prey on weaknesses of our neighbor.

Gambling fosters greed and stimulates belief in fate and chance. It is an alternative
religious system. Government sponsorship of gambling might even be seen to violate the separation of church and state by promoting a particular religious belief system.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Weissman.

MR. WEISSMAN: Thank you.

My name is Robert Weissman. I'm Co-director of Essential Action, an organization which works on combatting abuses of corporate power. I'm also editor of Multinational Monitor Magazine, which is a Ralph Nader founded publication that focuses on multinational corporations.

I recently wrote an article on casino gambling for Multinational Monitor, and I brought copies of the issue in which that article appears for the Commission.

Essential Action views the gambling industry as it's evolved in this country over the last decade or two as a case study in corporate greed and predation. Gambling interests prey on communities. Focusing on down trodden and de-industrialized