

1 Urge the conscience of our federal elected
2 officials to rise to the need for immediate gambling
3 regulation. The continued wholesome quality of life
4 of American towns like Ocean City, Maryland, as well
5 as other home towns throughout our great land, look to
6 you for help in making these much needed regulations
7 become a reality.

8 The residents and visitors of Ocean City,
9 Maryland, thank you for this opportunity, as well as
10 the opportunity we have to work together protecting
11 the quality of life of all Americans.

12 Thank you, and I'll see you on the
13 Boardwalk.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

15 Cheryl Lowell.

16 MS. LOWELL: Good afternoon,
17 Commissioners. My name is Cheryl Lowell. I'm
18 employed by Grand Casino, Gulfport, Mississippi. I'm
19 a lifelong resident of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

20 The gaming industry has opened up career
21 opportunities for me that would not have been realized
22 otherwise. I worked in lower level management for

1 approximately ten years and was stagnant in my career
2 field. I, like many other professionals, would have
3 to either leave the state for better opportunities or
4 accept the status quo.

5 Gaming has also given lots of career
6 opportunities to thousands of individuals who were
7 unemployed or under-employed prior to the casinos. I
8 have had the opportunity of seeing lives transformed
9 as a result of this industry. Individuals who were on
10 welfare or under-employed, not only have they gained
11 employment and income as a result of that, but they
12 have gained self-esteem and pride.

13 Several of our employees have taken
14 advantage of our GED programs, literacy programs, or
15 our tuition reimbursement programs.

16 Prior to the gaming industry, thousands of
17 Gulf Coast residents could not afford proper medical
18 coverage. It was either not available through their
19 employers or the cost was prohibitive. They now have
20 adequate health insurance coverage and the peace of
21 mind knowing that should they or a family member fall
22 ill, they can unhesitatingly seek medical attention.

1 As a result of gaming on the Mississippi
2 Gulf Coast, the gaming industry has created 12,500
3 jobs with an annual payroll of \$275 million. The
4 unemployment rate fell from seven or 7.1 percent in
5 1992 to 4.6 percent in 1996. The retail sales revenue
6 increased 58 percent over a four-year period, and the
7 sales tax increased 60 percent over a four-year
8 period.

9 I'm also very active in my community and
10 have been prior to the gaming industries. I serve on
11 the board of directors of the Nonprofit Board. I'm a
12 board member of the American Business Women
13 Association, vice president of the Gulfport chapter of
14 the NAACP. I'm a mentor and volunteer with Junior
15 Achievement in School Program.

16 Thank you for having this opportunity.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

18 Mr. Robert -- and how do you pronounce
19 your last name?

20 MR. DETLEFSEN: Detlefsen, Madame
21 Chairman.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Detlefsen.

1 MR. DETLEFSEN: Yes, I'm Robert Detlefsen,
2 and I'm a Senior Research Fellow at the Competitive
3 Enterprise Institute, a nonprofit, public policy
4 research organization based here in Washington.

5 Madame Chairman, in your opening statement
6 at this Commission's first meeting last June, you
7 reminded your fellow Commissioners and the public that
8 the Commission's job is to focus narrowly on the
9 economic and sociological effects of legalized
10 gambling. As for the moral issues raised by gambling,
11 you expressed your hope that the religious community
12 would begin a dialogue on that subject.

13 Congress was correct, of course, to limit
14 the scope of this Commission's inquiry to empirical
15 questions, but as it attempts to follow that mandate,
16 this Commission runs the risk of overemphasizing those
17 aspects of gambling that readily lend themselves to
18 the quantitative research methodologies favored by
19 modern social scientists.

20 Indeed, that tendency is already reflected
21 in the Research Subcommittee's proposed study
22 questions that were distributed at yesterday's