

1 MR. BARRON: Good afternoon. My name is
2 Bruce Barron, and I live in suburban Pittsburgh,
3 Pennsylvania. I am a regional associate for the
4 Pennsylvania Family Institute and a frequent writer on
5 issues of policy and politics.

6 With me as visual aids are my daughter
7 Tricia and my son Trevor. My wife is pursuing my
8 younger son elsewhere in the room. Please pardon the
9 appearance. We are on vacation, but since we're just
10 completing our vacation and we're passing through
11 Washington, we figured the odds of passing through
12 Washington right when your hearing was taking place
13 was less than, well, less than an individual or a
14 regional economy striking it rich at the casino. So
15 here we are.

16 And since I'm on vacation, my props are a
17 little limited. Bill Thompson, of Nevada, Las Vegas,
18 as you know, uses a bathtub to illustrate the
19 economics of gambling, what's poured in and what
20 drains out. I couldn't bring a bathtub so these
21 buckets and a shovel will have to do.

22 And to give my presentation a Pittsburgh

1 flavor, this bucket represents our beautiful city with
2 our three rivers and our nationally acclaimed quality
3 of life and a decent, albeit not booming, economy, but
4 some think that with casinos we could do even better.
5 So they want to invest some of our resources, money,
6 time, political capital, and tourist promotion
7 efforts, in this alluring dream bucket of gambling.

8 And at first things look pretty good.

9 Flashy new steamboats coming into town, or a new
10 construction business, or new buildings when the land
11 based casinos get finished, unless you're in New
12 Orleans and the casino never gets finished, but then
13 things start falling through as the factors that have
14 made gambling a new loser everywhere in the country in
15 terms of economic, as well as social, impact take
16 effect.

17 You've already heard these reasons. If
18 you could just hold up the signs, I have seven
19 outlined in my written statement. These are six of
20 them. I couldn't get crime on because the crime one
21 was stolen, of course.

22 (Laughter.)

1 MR. BARRON: But these arguments have
2 convinced persons on both left and right, public
3 policy experts, media analysts, popular opinion
4 referendums, that legalized gambling expansion is not
5 a good idea.

6 The one point I want to make is that worst
7 of all once a community or a state decides to embrace
8 gambling, it can never again be what it was. Not only
9 is it virtually impossible to eliminate gambling once
10 it's legalized and not only do you have ruined lives
11 and economic dislocations, but making gambling part of
12 what your community is known for and part of the basis
13 by which it seeks to attract others changes that
14 community's character permanently.

15 In short, not only do you fail to gain
16 what you expected, but you no longer have as much of
17 what you started with.

18 This is not a debate about personal
19 freedom to gambling. Nobody is talking about closing
20 down Las Vegas or cracking down on the informal
21 wagering that happens everywhere among family and
22 friends. Rather it's about whether we'll put the

1 stamp of legitimacy on an industry that thrives on
2 appealing to greed and fantasy, that undermines the
3 values and work ethic on which this country was built
4 and on which we continue to depend.

5 All of us, but especially you, the
6 honorable members of this study Commission, will give
7 account to our conscience, to our neighbors, including
8 those on whom gambling will wreak indescribable harm,
9 and in the words of our founding fathers, our supreme
10 judge as to whether this scourge will expand,
11 continue, or be constrained.

12 Now, my time is up, and I regret that my
13 use of props has added a new smirch to the historic
14 reputation of the Watergate Hotel. In the spirit of
15 the gambling industry, which takes the profits and
16 lets others clean up after it, I trust you can clean
17 up after me. However, if that's objectionable to any
18 of you, I will clean up myself.

19 Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Barron, I have to
21 say the mother in me says, "No, you're going to clean
22 up that mess."

1 (Laughter.)

2 MR. BARRON: Okay. Well, I can't put it
3 in this bucket.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I want to thank the
5 Commissioners, and that is our final witness for the
6 day.

7 Throughout our time of testimony you have
8 heard over and over again of the materials that I
9 bring today or my testimony, and I made the decision
10 not to try to disrupt by distributing that material.
11 So all of your packages are available for you as
12 Commissioners upon your departure.

13 With that final note, the meeting is
14 adjourned.

15 Thank you.

16 (Whereupon, at 3:44 p.m., the meeting was
17 adjourned.)

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