

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'd like to recognize the
2 Honorable Wayne Taylor.

3 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Good morning, Madam Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Members of the Commission. My name
6 is Wayne Taylor, Chairman of the Hopi Tribe and on behalf of the
7 Hopi people I want to express our appreciation to the study
8 Commission for this opportunity to present my views on the
9 impacts of Indian gaming on Indian people.

10 The Hopi view is, of course, the view of a non-gaming
11 tribe. As many of you know, in 1995 the Hopi Tribe by a
12 referendum vote rejected gaming as a means of revenue generation
13 or economic development. The road of the Hopi people was
14 overwhelming against the concept of gaming on Hopi lands. At the
15 heart of this decision was a concern expressed by many of our
16 people about the potential adverse effects of making gaming
17 easily available to our people.

18 The potential risk to the cultural integrity of the
19 Hopi society seemed to outweigh the potential benefits to
20 engaging in a tribal gaming enterprise. While the Hopi people
21 have clearly spoken on this point, let me state clearly for you
22 today that the Hopi Tribe respects and supports the sovereign
23 right of other tribes to choose differently. We realize that the
24 decision to engage in gaming activities begins as a personal
25 choice for individual members of the various tribes and
26 ultimately is a political choice for the leadership of the tribes
27 based at least in part on the unique circumstances of each tribe.

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1 We will continue to support the right of other tribes
2 to make this choice. When we think about the impacts of tribal
3 gaming we should start by remembering the underlying purposes of
4 Indian gaming enterprises. At the heart of any tribe's decision
5 to engage in gaming activities seems to be a sincere desire to
6 advance tribal sovereignty and achieve true self-determination.
7 We all realize that without adequate financial resources the
8 promise of tribal self-determination is never reached and remains
9 only a dream.

10 Choosing one's future must always be supported by the
11 means to make the future a reality. Since the birth of Indian
12 gaming in 1979 a number of tribes have been able to use their
13 gaming revenue to provide increased levels of essential
14 government services to their people, services which might not
15 have been possible without these revenues. In the face of an
16 almost non-existent tax base on most reservations and a shrinking
17 federal dollar, some tribes have found that gaming revenues have
18 been the difference between an inadequate program and quality
19 governmental services.

20 Certainly one cannot argue that the provision of
21 increasing levels of health care, housing, educational assistance
22 on these reservations is anything but a positive result of the
23 gaming industry. However, the analysis should not stop here.
24 When we think about the impacts of tribal gaming in addition to
25 the possible impacts on tribal economies, we must also look at at
26 least three other areas of impact including; one, the impacts on
27 the individual tribal member gaming participant coming to tribal
28 casinos to spend their individual dollars; two, the impact of the

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1 gaming activity on the gaming tribe itself, in other words, the
2 tribal government sponsoring the gaming activity and the
3 individual tribal members and finally; three, the impact of
4 Indian gaming on non-gaming tribes.

5 Perhaps the most important question that Indian
6 leaders can ask themselves about the impact of Indian gaming is
7 the question of what is the overall effect on the lives of Indian
8 people of Indian gaming. This requires an examination of whether
9 on balance Indian gaming has improved the quality of life on our
10 tribal homelands and whether it has furthered tribal sovereignty
11 and self-determination. This debate about impact of tribal
12 gaming is different than the usual debate on gaming. This is not
13 about federal regulations or state compacts. This debate
14 examines the effects of the interaction between gaming
15 enterprises and individual tribal members.

16 In stating the Hopi views about the impacts of gaming
17 on the lives of individual tribal members, let me point out that
18 we have not conducted any polls or commissioned any scientific
19 studies aimed at the particular aspects of human behavior. Our
20 views are stated simply from what we have observed. One need
21 only visit any Indian casino to realize that a significant number
22 of casino patrons are Indian people from the reservations on
23 which the casino is located or from other nearby reservations,
24 including non-gaming reservations.

25 From this observation, it is easy to conclude that
26 Indian people are spending a part, albeit an undefined part, of
27 their financial resources in gaming activities. I believe it is
28 also safe to conclude that most Indian people do not routinely

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1 have a surplus disposal income which should be expended on games
2 of chance. Most of our people on most reservations and tribal
3 communities find it difficult enough to accumulate enough income
4 on a monthly basis to meet the most basic needs of their
5 families.

6 While the decision to expend those funds in gaming
7 activities is an individual choice, the impacts on family members
8 who frequently do not participate in that choice are nevertheless
9 effected. The effects of tribal gaming operations on individual
10 tribal members and their families deserve a thorough examination
11 before any final conclusions can be drawn. A substantial measure
12 of the responsibility for studies aimed at reaching these
13 conclusions should be shouldered by the gaming tribes.

14 The effects of gaming activity on the entire tribal
15 culture and society must also be considered. The impact on
16 individual tribal members will always translate into impacts on
17 the overall tribal culture. Indeed, it is not difficult to
18 envision tribal gaming not only influencing but also becoming a
19 significant part of tribal culture, perhaps even pushing aside in
20 importance other characteristics of tribal culture that have long
21 sustained us and which should be cultivated and nourished.

22 None of us would want to run the risk that gaming and
23 its revenues somehow becomes a major identifying factor when
24 people think about Indian culture. No tribal government should
25 put itself in a position such that it become so dependent on
26 gaming revenues that it loses sight of the need to focus on
27 matters such as building and nurturing the spirit of our people,
28 encouraging our children to exercise their minds across a wide

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1 field of endeavors and perhaps most importantly, to encourage our
2 people to cultivate the spiritual strengths that have sustained
3 all of our tribes throughout history.

4 Tribal governments must be cautious when they embrace
5 gaming, cautious not to lose sight of these higher values and
6 purposes which each of us as tribal leaders should be working
7 toward. The positive impacts of tribal gaming, and there are
8 many, must not blind us to the accompanying negative impacts.
9 Our elders have taught us that there is a balance in life that
10 with every good thing that comes into our life, there is also
11 some things that are not so good.

12 Our responsibility to our children is to maximize
13 those good things and minimize those that are not so good.
14 Indian gaming must be subject to the same sort of balancing.
15 Finally, let me turn to the matter of the impacts of gaming on
16 the non-gaming tribe.

17 Unfortunately there has always been a tendency in
18 this country on the part of the non-Indian to lump all Indian
19 people into one category. Most non-Indians tend to generalize
20 about Indian America and to feel that what is true of one tribal
21 society is also true of another. Public perception or more
22 properly stated, incorrect public perception, is the enemy of all
23 tribes. Gaming and non-gaming, perhaps even more unfortunate is
24 the fact that public perception almost always translate into
25 congressional perception. One of the most dangerous oxymorons
26 currently floating around in non-Indian America and particularly
27 in Congress is the idea of the so-called rich Indian tribe.

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1 Somehow I have never associated the word "rich" with
2 the words "Indian tribe". Many members of the public and
3 Congress seem very comfortable with this phrase. Unfortunately
4 for us this is a classic example of public perception failing to
5 match up with reality. With the exception of a very few, very
6 small and very fortunate tribes, we have had -- who have had
7 extraordinary success with tribal gaming, the majority of tribes
8 across the country still find it very difficult to reconcile the
9 obligation and responsibilities side of their ledger with the
10 income side. Most of us continue to struggle merely to provide
11 the most basic governmental services to our people, protect our
12 lands and the environment and provide meaningful opportunities
13 for growth and advancement of our people.

14 This false perception by the public and Congress has
15 begun to translate itself into phrase such as "means testing",
16 with the emphasis on mean spirited. Congress has, in recent
17 years, begun to find new justifications for its historic lack of
18 enthusiasm for funding its trust responsibilities to the Indian
19 people of this country. We had become easy for members of
20 Congress to generalize this attitude by expressing the belief
21 that tribes across the country are rich as a result of tribal
22 gaming, are fully capable of taking care of the full range of
23 funding needs, and should, therefore, not look to the Federal
24 Government for assistance.

25 This is perhaps the most stinging impact of Indian
26 tribal gaming on non-gaming tribes. While tribal gaming
27 successes have provided no direct tangible benefits to non-gaming
28 tribes, the non-gaming tribes, nevertheless, share the brunt of

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1 the congressional backlash and unfavorable public perception.
2 All the negative characterizations typically associated with
3 gaming activities such as compulsive addictive behavior, the
4 search for the illusive something for nothing, the desire to get
5 rich quick and the reaping of financial benefits at the hands of
6 human behavior, these characteristics tend to spill over to
7 effect all Indian tribes whether gaming or not.

8 Gaming tribes should seriously consider initiatives
9 aimed at eliminating this unfortunate and unfair spill-over
10 effect. Potentially the most danger impact of the incorrect
11 public perception of gaming on all tribes is the noticeable shift
12 in the way the tribes are being viewed, not only in Congress but
13 by the public in general. In the past Congress and the courts
14 and I believe the public have viewed tribes as governments
15 exercising governmental responsibilities and dedicated to the
16 best interests of their people. There now seems to be a shifting
17 of that view toward one in which tribal governments are now
18 viewed primarily as casino operators and only secondarily as
19 tribal governments.

20 I'm afraid my time has run out.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much, Chairman
22 Taylor. We will submit the entire testimony for the full
23 Commission.

24 CHAIRMAN TAYLOR: Thank you.

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