

1 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: On our agenda Mr. Tucker is  
2 listed next is that --

3 MR. TUCKER: That would be fine.

4 COMMISSIONER WILHELM: Okay. Mr. Tucker, thank you.

5 MR. TUCKER: Yes, I am Tom Tucker and I am President  
6 of the California Council on Problem Gambling and I'm also a  
7 recovering compulsive gambler for a number of years and a  
8 recovering alcoholic.

9 I was asked to put together a social impact paper,  
10 which I have, I'm not going to repeat it. I can just tell you  
11 that yes there is some social consequences as a result of Indian  
12 gaming. I would say that some of the stores that we found in at  
13 least in the California tribes are a result of the Indian casinos  
14 in the California area are probably not really that much un-  
15 similar that you might find in other situations whether it be  
16 Atlantic City or Foxwoods or any other place.

17 But they're serious problems. They're talking about  
18 a young woman who got to the point of her gambling that she left  
19 her 18 month old child in the car for 14 hours while she gambled  
20 compulsively. And when she came out the child was crying and was  
21 wet and was hungry. And these are not good stories, these are  
22 serious social impacts.

23 There's stories of one woman who's husband died he  
24 was a little bit older than her, but she was a young widow at 42  
25 years of age. She went to one of the local casinos and started  
26 to play video keno in absence of her grief or in substitution for  
27 her grief feelings. And in the first year she gambled \$370,000  
28 on a video keno machine in one local casino and then tried to get

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1 some help for herself and came back and found that she was unable  
2 to stop gambling and she finished in the next year gambling away  
3 the balance of the half million dollar estate. And she was left  
4 basically penniless, she does have her home, she's struggling  
5 now. She said that she would probably never have gone into  
6 gambling herself, she would never have -- she doesn't believe --  
7 she doesn't believe she would have gone Laughlin or to Las Vegas,  
8 but in any event she wound up with these kinds of problems.

9 I've answered the help line for about three years now  
10 and I've heard a lot of stories. I can tell you that the help  
11 line statistics, which I hope you have in front of you there,  
12 will show you that the majority of calls that we do get in  
13 California now are, in fact, from Indian casinos. Running a  
14 close second, however, is the California state lottery at 21  
15 percent.

16 So and unfortunately these figures are very, very  
17 misleading because the California state lottery recently  
18 themselves said that they thought they wanted to advertise a  
19 problem gambling referral line. But they didn't do that until  
20 April of 1998. And by the time we go the statistics we only had  
21 or two months of their statistics so they're only showing you at  
22 about 7 percent, but I have the June 1998 figures and those are  
23 21.1 percent in California state lottery.

24 And what I'm really saying is that now that they're  
25 putting out the number we're getting the -- the emphasis is  
26 coming from the lottery players. Where before they never did  
27 they just never had our number. And most people will agree that  
28 people that play the lottery exclusively are not really gambling

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1 addicts per se, but that most gambling addicts, most compulsive  
2 gamblers myself included would buy a \$100.00 worth of lottery  
3 scratch offs at a time to kill time in between races or if I was  
4 in a town that didn't have any gambling I would do that myself  
5 just for the rush in the action.

6 So all I'm really saying here is that the social  
7 impact as far as we can see has been large. I've talked to  
8 judges, I've talked to probation departments, I've talked to  
9 child protection agencies and they're telling me that things are  
10 happening, you know. In some of the local meetings people are  
11 coming in with court cards all of the sudden that they're being  
12 required by the judges to attend recovery meetings as a result of  
13 their crimes that were committed through the local gambling at  
14 the local Indian casinos.

15 This is new to us. We rarely saw that before. Now  
16 we're seeing a lot of this happening and they're case loads are  
17 picking up so that's part and parcel of it.

18 On the other hand I'm seeing that in general most  
19 people in the gambling industry themselves I think the race track  
20 people said the other day that they've been waiting 60 years to  
21 identify that they had a problem with gambling. And yet they  
22 want to try to start doing something, but they haven't yet.  
23 They're trying to do something. The lottery itself has waited 12  
24 years to say something. And I think that now that the American  
25 Gaming Association has come out and said that yeah we need a  
26 responsible gaming policy all over the country. I'm very  
27 encouraged by that.

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1 But I believe that there should be a total approach  
2 to all of this and that is like a one percent solution I call it.  
3 Jokingly one of my colleagues said the other day that if they're  
4 really serious about doing something on prevention education for  
5 young children and treatment and the like well then you keep 99.9  
6 percent of your profits just give us one tenth of one percent and  
7 see what we can do to help these families.

8 Gambling kills. When you folks go to your next stop  
9 I'm afraid you're going to find out that last weekend a young man  
10 committed suicide by jumping off a river boat casino in  
11 Louisville or in Louisiana, pardon me. And these are stories  
12 that I hear all the time.

13 People that are in my area they drive hours to get  
14 over here to buy a power ball ticket because we don't have it in  
15 California. That's almost a 10 hour round trip drive to buy one  
16 ticket. I mean think about it, is that normal behavior?  
17 Probably not.

18 So we believe that, you know, people that have this  
19 it's an illness. They're sick spiritually, they're sick mentally  
20 and emotionally and physically. Some of us deprived ourselves of  
21 our insulin when we were supposed to be, you know, taking care of  
22 our insulin problems we didn't take care of those. We didn't eat  
23 properly, we didn't rest properly, we went for days without  
24 sleep. And then sadly on the way back home we had situations  
25 that either resulted in car accidents or we drifted off the road  
26 or whatever.

27 So these are serious problems and they need to be  
28 addressed and that's really what we're all about is to help, you

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1 know, do the research and so forth to get the word out there to  
2 people.

3 I'm sad to report, and I love California it's my home  
4 all my adult life, I'm sad to report that we are embarrassed  
5 whenever we go to conferences -- National Council on Problem  
6 Gambling things like we just went to in Las Vegas that everyone  
7 says what's the matter with California they're not supporting any  
8 kind of education. There's not one course in compulsive gambling  
9 or problem gambling education in the entire school system. Not  
10 one and yet the money for the lottery, two to three billion  
11 dollars in sales every year, is supposed to be going for  
12 education. It's not happening.

13 And what's happening to, you know, people that are  
14 actually are trying to chip in and do something about it? Well,  
15 I must report and I have a fact sheet, I hope you have it in  
16 front of you there, that there's very little being done. But the  
17 Native American community came forth first. They were the first  
18 government to step up and take care of us by getting an office.

19 We're open for 12 years now as an all volunteer  
20 organization and we've been working out of our homes and  
21 answering the phones at night out of our homes. Now, they've  
22 come up with an office space for us and they've stepped up to the  
23 plate a little bit. The race track industry did something as  
24 well just before your Commission meeting, just before your  
25 Commission visit. They gave us \$25,000.00 to pay for the help  
26 line calls. As you may have seen they have these 800 numbers on  
27 the back of the betting lines in the race track.

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1           So we think it's a total approach and either I'm part  
2 of the problem or I'm part of the solution. And I have nothing  
3 against any form of gaming, but I do have a lot against a form of  
4 gaming that doesn't see their responsibility in taking care of  
5 these problems. Because you know let's face it eventually what's  
6 going to happen is 30 more attorney's general are going to start  
7 bringing suits against casinos. They're going to do it I  
8 guarantee it because we saw it with tobacco, we saw it with  
9 alcohol and we're going to see here it eventually.

10           You've got, you know, several remedies for alcoholic  
11 -- I mean people that serve alcoholics who are obviously were  
12 drunk and they go out and kill somebody. Well there's a civil  
13 penalty there and sometimes a statutory penalty against  
14 bartenders serving somebody who's obviously drunk. We do have  
15 some serious problems with people, we know who the compulsive  
16 gamblers are. Just look at the ATM machine around midnight,  
17 okay, because that's when you can -- when it's around midnight  
18 and you've already taken \$500.00 from your checking account in  
19 one day as soon it goes one second past midnight you can get  
20 another \$500.00, okay. These are where the compulsive gamblers  
21 are hanging around. That's just a small example of what you  
22 might see.

23           And I'm quite sure that people that are in the gaming  
24 industry are quite well aware of the signs and symptoms. But  
25 however we need direction we can be your best friends if you  
26 allow us the opportunity to give you the what we've learned over  
27 the past 15 years. Thank you.

28           CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you Mr. Tucker.

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