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CHAIRPERSON JAMES:

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Ann Geer.

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MS. GEER: Hello, my name is Ann Geer and I'm the President of the National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion, which is a political action organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The National Coalition is a grass roots organization that represents a network of activists in all 50 states who are greatly concerned about the substantial increase in legalized gambling in the United States.

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Our concern is based on two specific issues. The first issue is the number of casualties of the gambling phenomenon, which show that the number of

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1 people who become addicted to gambling increases in
2 direct proportion to the amount of gambling venues
3 available.

4 The second concern is about the dependency
5 of state and local governments on proceeds of gambling
6 as a source of revenue. This symbiotic relationship
7 creates the unhealthy circumstance of elected officials
8 being required to become promoters of gambling at the
9 same time that this promotion increases the number of
10 compulsive gambling victims.

11 This vicious cycle is a unique occurrence
12 in that historically, government has served as a
13 regulator, rather than a promoter of industries that
14 are demonstrably harmful to its consumers, I cite the
15 tobacco and alcohol industries as an example. Since
16 the government has little vested interest in the
17 promotion of alcohol and tobacco consumption the role
18 of government as regulator is appropriate, in their
19 recommendations of prohibition and enforcements.
20 Government has taken seriously the mandate to provide
21 for the general welfare by heeding the caution of
22 surgeons general, the National Institute of Health, and
23 other bodies, relative to education and prevention
24 issues in these particular industries.

1 I therefore propose that the National
2 Gambling Impact Study Commission consider a corrective
3 model for the gambling industry because I believe that
4 there is comparability to previously cited industries
5 in that there is extensive data as to the negative
6 effect of gambling in a percentage of its consumers.
7 This model would propose a set aside tax on all forms
8 of legalized gambling to be used in equal portions for
9 prevention and treatment programs. The rationale for
10 this dual designation is that the role of government
11 relative to legalized gambling, is inverse to its
12 regulatory role in the alcohol and tobacco industries.

13 Therefore, this taxation to benefit the
14 treatment and prevention of addicted gamblers is a
15 system of checks and balances which would offset
16 government's active promotion of legalized gambling.
17 The time frame for this public input session is
18 insufficient to fully detail this proposal but I am
19 certainly available to further discuss its particulars.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much.

21 MS. GEER: And I do thank you for this
22 opportunity.

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. And any
2 other information that you would like to submit we are
3 happy to receive.