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11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES:

12 Ann Geer.

13 MS. GEER: Hello, my name is Ann Geer and

14 I'm the President of the National Coalition Against

15 Gambling Expansion, which is a political action

16 organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of

17 Massachusetts. The National Coalition is a grass roots

18 organization that represents a network of activists in

19 all 50 states who are greatly concerned about the

20 substantial increase in legalized gambling in the

21 United States.

22 Our concern is based on two specific

23 issues. The first issue is the number of casualties of

24 the gambling phenomenon, which show that the number of

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.