

1 ANITA BEDELL, ILLINOIS CHURCH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

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3 MS. BEDELL: My name is Anita Bedell, the executive
4 director of ILCAAP. I'd just like you to note that riverboat
5 gambling was legalized in Illinois without a vote of the people.
6 As citizens throughout the state discovered, that many of their
7 own city council members and developers were asking to have
8 riverboats come into their own communities on their own
9 initiative. They formed groups and they put advisory referendums
10 on the ballot so that they could have a voice in this process.
11 If you look through the packet, there is a list of citizen
12 referendums that were put on the ballot and the results.

13 Many elected officials in Illinois, as they left
14 office, became lobbyists for gambling interests, also in your
15 packet that is attached. These officials first worked to secure
16 riverboat licenses. Later on they worked to change the riverboat
17 gambling act. They wanted land based casinos; they wanted
18 Chicago riverboats; they wanted dockside gambling, splitting and
19 moving licenses. All the time that this legislation was being
20 proposed it was to level the playing field and to compete with
21 other states. This was the reason the legislators used.

22 ILCAAP, in 1995, started working with all these other
23 groups. We became the statewide coordinator. We asked for a
24 statewide referendum on the issue, asked if there could be a vote
25 of the people before gambling was expanded in Illinois. This
26 legislation was not passed. In fact, at the end there was an
27 effort to attach dockside gambling to the bill.

28 In 1996, there was a legislative gambling study task
29 force that was put together as a way to stop a statewide

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1 referendum because it was gaining momentum from the people.
2 Their report is attached also. It is just a summary report.
3 There were no recommendations. Unlike this committee there was
4 no research. Basically they heard from people who had done
5 studies, people who were opposed to gambling and the other two
6 days they heard from people who wanted to expand gambling in
7 various forms.

8 There are deals that are made behind closed doors in
9 Illinois. Last year two bills were passed. There were shell
10 bills. They have gone into conference committee twice. They
11 have been put together in the back room and come out at the very
12 end of the session. Legislators are asked to vote on these bills
13 without reading them. Their leaders are telling them what is in
14 them and then they are asked for a vote.

15 One thing that is driving this I believe is greed.
16 Campaign contributions have exceeded or have gone up to the same
17 interest as the American Medical Association in Illinois. In
18 1990, \$50,000 was given to political candidates in Illinois. In
19 1994, it was over \$1 million and it has stayed at that rate. We
20 believe that legislators are trying to put gambling only as a
21 revenue source. They look at it as a source of revenue. They do
22 not want to raise taxes because they will not get re-elected, so
23 they look at the tax and they do not look at the social cost.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN JAMES: About how much time is remaining?
26 Two minutes.

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