MR. ASHE: Good afternoon. My name is Paul Ashe, I’m a chairman and president of the National Council on Problem Gambling. I think I’m going to propose at the next meeting to change our name to the National Council of Disordered Gambling.

Madame Chair, Commissioners, we would like to begin our remarks by commending you all --.

CHAIR JAMES: How are we doing on the mike?

MR. ASHE: I would like to commend you all on the landmark work you have done over the past year and a half, the task is not a simple one, and you ought to be congratulated for the effort you have made to further our nation’s understanding of the impact of gambling on our society today.

As you begin to prepare your final report to Congress and the President, we would like to again thank you on behalf of the problem gamblers we serve for the opportunity to contribute to this effort.

The National Council on Problem Gaming has submitted in detail our written recommendations this past week, which were submitted on February 3rd, and constitutes a 30 bullet summary, which you asked to be consolidated to three pages, and we tried to comply with your request.

As a national organization we have grown to represent affiliates in 35 states, and have collected issues and concerns from across the country with feedback from our membership which includes experts from around the world.

The NCPG understands that the majority of Americans enjoy gambling as a form of entertainment. However, it is not a risk-free activity. You have heard a wide variety of discussions on definitions, studies and surveys.
But it is an important thing to remember, that while pathological gambling is a relatively rare disease, it is a real disorder. This disorder can be researched, it can be identified, and it can be treated.

I would like to present our Executive Vice President to highlight our primary recommendations. Thank you.