local level, the state level. We're happy that you as
a Commission will study the money and the muscle and
the pressure we have felt as citizens.

We look forward to working with you.

Thanks for being here.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Barbara -- and please
help me with the correct pronunciation. Is it
Knickelbein.

MS. KNICKELBEIN: Knickelbein.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Knickelbein.

MS. KNICKELBEIN: Good afternoon,
distinguished members of the Commission. My name is
Barbara Knickelbein. I'm the Maryland State
Coordinator for NCAGE and the chair of the Church and
Society Commission of the Glen Burnie United Methodist
Church.

I've come before you today to voice my
deep concern as an American about the rapid expansion
of gambling in this country in the last few years and
its negative economic and social impact on society.

Attached to my written statement is a
letter to the editor I had published recently in the
Baltimore Sun showing just one day of the 20 to 30 gambling related articles I read from mainstream newspapers and magazine on a daily basis.

The more I read, the more I become alarmed with its proliferation in my state, the neighboring states, and throughout this country. Yes, gambling does appear to bring jobs and money to some areas, but it brings with it far much more trouble than it's worth.

I've been fighting this battle on nothing but economic and social grounds. Yet time and time again, because I am an active leader in my local church the press refers to it as a money versus morals fight, and lest you think this is nothing but a conservative Christian fight, I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that the PBS show "Front Line" and the ultra liberal Mother Jones Magazine recently showed the down side of gambling. Mother Jones, July-August '97 online magazine gives a state-by-state accounting of the obscene amount of money the gambling industry spends on lobbying efforts and campaign contributions.
What is the average citizen to think?

What am I to think? Is our government truly for sale?

Since there is no massive grassroots efforts supporting gambling, then why is there so much attention on this subject? Frankly, money equals access, and the gambling industry with its deep pockets has the ear of our lawmakers.

All we're asking is that the gambling industry tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. When they approach our legislators, they often pull revenue figures out of thin air and don't offer proof to the validity of those figures.

They also downplay or totally ignore the negative economic and social impact that their so-called product brings to an area.

I'm very optimistic about the mission of this distinguished Commission. You truly have our country's future in your hands. We urge that legal and factual studies be conducted that are not funded by the gambling industry, showing the good, the bad, and the ugly.

What we need from you is a commitment to
find that truth and a commitment to stem the purchase
of influence. Armed with the truth and on a level
playing field, we are confident that our legislators
will better be able to make prudent decisions in the
future and will see clearly that the bad and the ugly
far outweigh any good that gambling expansion brings.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Murrell -- is that

MR. WATKINS: Murrell Watkins.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Murrell Watkins.

Welcome.

MR. WATKINS: Thank you.

The impact of gambling in Atlantic City.

I feel that the gambling has affected the black
community and black businesses in the resort. The
destruction of the minority community due to the
improvement of roadway access routes and the new
Convention Center, the proposal of building a tunnel
through a stable black neighborhood, relocating people
in Baccarat Boulevard, residents in Pitney Village
must be relocated by the end of September 1997.