Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. McCabe.

MR. McCABE: Yes, thank you, distinguished members of the Commission.

My name is Christopher McCabe, and I've represented Maryland's 14th Senate District since 1991. While I have been involved in a variety of issues impacting my state since entering public service, the issue of expanded gambling has commanded my greatest focus over the past three years.

In 1995, in response to what I perceived was a concerted effort by out-of-state interests to try to legalize casinos in Maryland, I co-founded Marylanders Against Casinos, a grassroots business and citizen coalition opposed to this legalization.

Aside from gambling that is authorized on Indian lands, the debate over gambling, how much, what kind, where, is largely decided by elected legislators in state capitals across America. In 1995, the Maryland General Assembly created a task force similar in scope to the National Gambling Impact
Study Commission to assess the costs and benefits of expanded gambling in the form of casinos and slot machine operations.

Our six-month study included testimony from national experts, is dwarfed in size and resources to yours, but I anticipate that your conclusions will be quite similar to ours, that the long-range negative economic, social and political impact of more gambling far exceed the short-term tax revenue and job creation from casino type gambling.

The Maryland Task Force on Commercial Gaming Activities unanimously recommended to oppose casino legalization, but this recommendation has been largely forgotten as industry lobbyists and certain elected officials in our states contend that we need to be ahead of the gambling curve and that our horse racing industry is suffering because we do not have slot machines.

You will be inundated with information both for and against gambling during your deliberations. My State of Maryland already has more than its fair share: lottery, keno, and parimutuel betting. While
I could comfortably argue that government acts immorally when it encourages activities that make losers out of most of our citizens, I choose to emphasize the arguments that more gambling results in failed businesses, broken homes, lost productivity in the work place, higher regulatory and governmental costs, and political corruption.

While I will continue these arguments in my state as pressure increases for more gambling, I ask you to look at the collective experiences across the land of this legal, but damaging form of entertainment. I ask you to keep in mind that while we must respect the freedom and rights of individuals to pursue legal activities in our society, we must face up to the cost to the culture of unfettered gambling.

Finally, I would like to express the wishes of Mayor Jim Mathias of Ocean City, Maryland, who is here today, who is in partnership with those in opposition to the proliferation of more gambling in our state. He knows that more gambling stands as the greatest threat to tourism in Ocean City and other
resort areas.

Thank you for your service to the Commission, and I would be glad to act as a state resource to you as you conduct this important work.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Jim, how do you pronounce your last name?

MR. ZEISLOFT: Zeisloft.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Zeisloft, Mr. Jim Zeisloft.

MR. ZEISLOFT: Zeisloft. I wanted to say thank you to the Commission for this opportunity to speak with you.

I am James Zeisloft, the Executive Director of United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania. I represent some 565,000 United Methodists across the commonwealth as an advocate at the State House.

I wanted to speak to you about gambling as a moral issue, not a religious issue as the gaming interests might accuse me, but as a moral issue, nor can we agree with Senator Paul Simon that the question of gambling should not be a moral one; rather, it