MR. BARRON: Good afternoon. My name is Bruce Barron, and I live in suburban Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I am a regional associate for the Pennsylvania Family Institute and a frequent writer on issues of policy and politics.

With me as visual aids are my daughter Tricia and my son Trevor. My wife is pursuing my younger son elsewhere in the room. Please pardon the appearance. We are on vacation, but since we're just completing our vacation and we're passing through Washington, we figured the odds of passing through Washington right when your hearing was taking place was less than, well, less than an individual or a regional economy striking it rich at the casino. So here we are.

And since I'm on vacation, my props are a little limited. Bill Thompson, of Nevada, Las Vegas, as you know, uses a bathtub to illustrate the economics of gambling, what's poured in and what drains out. I couldn't bring a bathtub so these buckets and a shovel will have to do.

And to give my presentation a Pittsburgh
flavor, this bucket represents our beautiful city with our three rivers and our nationally acclaimed quality of life and a decent, albeit not booming, economy, but some think that with casinos we could do even better. So they want to invest some of our resources, money, time, political capital, and tourist promotion efforts, in this alluring dream bucket of gambling. And at first things look pretty good. Flashy new steamboats coming into town, or a new construction business, or new buildings when the land based casinos get finished, unless you're in New Orleans and the casino never gets finished, but then things start falling through as the factors that have made gambling a new loser everywhere in the country in terms of economic, as well as social, impact take effect.

You've already heard these reasons. If you could just hold up the signs, I have seven outlined in my written statement. These are six of them. I couldn't get crime on because the crime one was stolen, of course.

(Laughter.)
MR. BARON: But these arguments have convinced persons on both left and right, public policy experts, media analysts, popular opinion referendums, that legalized gambling expansion is not a good idea.

The one point I want to make is that worst of all once a community or a state decides to embrace gambling, it can never again be what it was. Not only is it virtually impossible to eliminate gambling once it's legalized and not only do you have ruined lives and economic dislocations, but making gambling part of what your community is known for and part of the basis by which it seeks to attract others changes that community's character permanently.

In short, not only do you fail to gain what you expected, but you no longer have as much of what you started with.

This is not a debate about personal freedom to gambling. Nobody is talking about closing down Las Vegas or cracking down on the informal wagering that happens everywhere among family and friends. Rather it's about whether we'll put the
stamp of legitimacy on an industry that thrives on appealing to greed and fantasy, that undermines the values and work ethic on which this country was built and on which we continue to depend.

All of us, but especially you, the honorable members of this study Commission, will give account to our conscience, to our neighbors, including those on whom gambling will wreak indescribable harm, and in the words of our founding fathers, our supreme judge as to whether this scourge will expand, continue, or be constrained.

Now, my time is up, and I regret that my use of props has added a new smirch to the historic reputation of the Watergate Hotel. In the spirit of the gambling industry, which takes the profits and lets others clean up after it, I trust you can clean up after me. However, if that's objectionable to any of you, I will clean up myself.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Barron, I have to say the mother in me says, "No, you're going to clean up that mess."
MR. BARRON: Okay. Well, I can't put it in this bucket.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I want to thank the Commissioners, and that is our final witness for the day.

Throughout our time of testimony you have heard over and over again of the materials that I bring today or my testimony, and I made the decision not to try to disrupt by distributing that material. So all of your packages are available for you as Commissioners upon your departure.

With that final note, the meeting is adjourned.

Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 3:44 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.)