CHAIRPERSON JAMES:

Kathleen Scanlan.

MS. SCANLAN: Good afternoon, members of the Commission, I'm very pleased to have a chance to address you here today. I'm Kathleen Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, a non-profit agency that addresses problem gambling.

The Council recognizes that most people who gamble do so for recreation, for entertainment and for fun. The Council does not take a prohibitionist stand against gambling, nor does it promote gambling. But it exists to advocate for the needs of compulsive gamblers, people for whom gambling has become anything but fun. Since elsewhere in these hearings you have been told about the numbers of people affected by this disorder I will take a few minutes instead to talk a little more in depth about some of the people who've called our help line recently.

One was a man who was seeking hope that he would somehow be able to stop his two to three hundred dollar a day lottery purchases, even though he has repeatedly promised himself each morning that he will
not buy any today, and has again, this day, broken that promise by noontime.

Another was a woman in her sixties looking for help because of her increased use of scratch tickets over the past six years. She lives on a fixed income of $10,000 a year and estimates that she spent $6,000 on scratch tickets last year. Her immediate need was for food.

Another was a man who owned a convenience store. He was seeking advice because an employee had scratched $3,000 worth of tickets for which she had not paid.

Another caller was a man who, once again, had spent his whole paycheck on Keno. After family arguments over his not having enough money to contribute to household expenses, he was able to borrow $500 to meet these expenses. On his way home from borrowing the money he stopped to buy gasoline, the station had Keno, and by the time he called us, desperate, he had $40 left. He was experiencing shame and panic.

For these people and their families, the Lottery has long since ceased to be fun. The Massachusetts Council is associated with a network of
councils on problem gambling throughout the country, all of whom could relate similar stories to you.

What we seek is public policy that supports responsible gambling. That public policy would promote research on disordered gambling, provide education about and prevention of disordered gambling, supply intervention and treatment to problem gamblers and their families. When governments themselves are sponsors, endorsers and promoters of gambling, as is the case with lotteries, that we're focusing on today, it is clear that there is a unique responsibility toward developing this type of public policy.

In Massachusetts, we have a Lottery that has, for over a decade, provided leadership in this area, through their acknowledging the reality of problem gambling, keeping informed about the issues and taking steps to approach them. This approach could well serve as a model for state lotteries throughout the country. This Commission gives us hope that creative solutions will emerge for the complex questions that have been raised throughout these hearings.

Thank you for the chance to speak with you today.
CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.