MR. QUERZE: Good afternoon, my name is Jack Querze and I'm a pathological gambler in recovery. I belong to a 12 step recovery program but because of their traditions I'm bound not to reveal the name of the program, nor am I a spokesman for the program.
I am also a volunteer worker for the Mass Council on Compulsive Gambling, and an out-patient at the Mt. Auburn Center for Problem Gambling. Gambling has been part of my life since I was eight years old and made my first bet through a family member on an illegal numbers game. Since then I occasionally gambled in safety until November 1988, when I had my first serious win on the Massachusetts State Lottery.

Unfortunately, it was the first of many wins. I thought gambling was easy but by July 1989 I was destitute, morally, physically and financially and was admitted with clinical depression to a treatment facility for two weeks. I could not be officially treated for gambling addiction under my group insurance but the gambling was treated under cover of my clinical depression.

Since 1989, I have been in and out of recovery. My longest period of sobriety lasted two and a half years and my cumulative clean time is almost six and a half years. Therapy has played a very important part in my recovery and I've been in treatment for a total of five years.

My current recovery from gambling, which has been totally the Lottery, started October 6, 1996
and therapy started in May, 1996. Volunteering at the Council for Compulsive Gambling started in March, '96 and continues today. Although not as intense as my volunteerism once was, it has undoubtably helped me to stay clean.

There are many reasons I wanted to address this panel today and its important to me that I mention a few of my fears and concerns about the legalization of gambling and its impact on me and perhaps many others like me.

One: the Lottery has created many new gamblers, many of which have become compulsive or problem gamblers.

Two: most compulsive gamblers go broke and many wind up with depression, morally corrupt or financially destitute. Although treatment is available at some 16 treatment centers which the state partially funds, most people do not know about the help being available. This aid should be publicized in a prominent fashion.

Three: bankruptcies, crime and suicides have increased over the years, credit cards are maxed out, houses are lost, embezzlements and robberies are increased and families are destroyed.
Can some, if not most, of this be related to compulsive gambling?

Most insurance programs do not allow for direct treatment of compulsive gambling unless the addict is treated under the guise of some sort of depression, a deceptive practice at best.

The Lottery has unclaimed prizes amounting to several million dollars each year. By an act of the legislature, signed by the governor, three million to treat addictions, alcohol, drugs and gambling, has been appropriated to the Mass. Department of Public Health for allocation to a variety of treatment programs and public awareness programs.

Currently, a pitiful one million dollars is allocated to education and treatment for compulsive gambling, one million out of almost one billion wagered.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.