

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

1 CHAIRPERSON JAMES:

2 Kathleen Scanlan.

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

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

20 One was a man who was seeking hope that he
21 would somehow be able to stop his two to three hundred
22 dollar a day lottery purchases, even though he has
23 repeatedly promised himself each morning that he will

1 not buy any today, and has again, this day, broken that
2 promise by noontime.

3 Another was a woman in her sixties looking
4 for help because of her increased use of scratch
5 tickets over the past six years. She lives on a fixed
6 income of \$10,000 a year and estimates that she spent
7 \$6,000 on scratch tickets last year. Her immediate
8 need was for food.

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

13 Another caller was a man who, once again,
14 had spent his whole paycheck on Keno. After family
15 arguments over his not having enough money to
16 contribute to household expenses, he was able to borrow
17 \$500 to meet these expenses. On his way home from
18 borrowing the money he stopped to buy gasoline, the
19 station had Keno, and by the time he called us,
20 desperate, he had \$40 left. He was experiencing shame
21 and panic.

22 For these people and their families, the
23 Lottery has long since ceased to be fun. The
24 Massachusetts Council is associated with a network of

1 councils on problem gambling throughout the country,
2 all of whom could relate similar stories to you.

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

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

23 Thank you for the chance to speak with you
24 today.

1

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.