

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
HONORABLE THOMAS P. GANNON, CHAIRMAN

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 295

AND

THE ISSUE OF GAMBLING

MAY 28, 1997

STATEMENT BY
REPRESENTATIVE JOE BATTISTO
189TH DISTRICT

I WANT TO THANK CHAIRMAN TOM GANNON AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TODAY ON HOUSE BILL 295 AND THE ISSUE OF GAMBLING IN GENERAL.

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ISSUE OF GAMBLING GOES BACK 20 YEARS TO 1977, JUST AFTER NEW JERSEY LEGALIZED CASINO GAMBLING FOR ATLANTIC CITY ONLY. AT THE TIME, NEVADA AND THEN NEW JERSEY WERE THE ONLY STATES WHERE CASINO-TYPE GAMBLING HAD BEEN LEGALIZED. HOWEVER, KNOWING THAT PENNSYLVANIA WOULD SOON BE AFFECTED AS A RESULT OF THE LEGALIZATION OF CASINO GAMBLING IN NEW JERSEY, I DECIDED TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF THE ISSUE OF GAMBLING TO ASCERTAIN HOW IT WOULD AFFECT THE LIVES OF PENNSYLVANIANS.

MY LENGTHY STUDY DREW TWO MAIN CONCLUSIONS. FIRST, I CONCLUDED THAT USING GAMBLING AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT IS NOT A SOUND POLICY. IN ADDITION, I LEARNED THAT THE LEGALIZATION

OF ADDITIONAL FORMS OF GAMBLING PRODUCES SERIOUS SOCIAL ILLS. OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE NOT CHANGED THIS FOCUS IN ARGUING AGAINST THE EXPANSION OF GAMBLING; AND I HAVE FOUND THAT THE MORE PEOPLE TAKE THE TIME TO STUDY THE REAL EFFECTS OF GAMBLING IN SOME DEPTH, THE MORE PEOPLE REJECT GAMBLING AS A VIABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL.

THEREFORE, I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT YOU UNDERTAKE A STUDY YOURSELVES AS THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OR BEGIN A JOINT STUDY WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE. HOWEVER, THE BEST APPROACH MIGHT BE TO HAVE A COMMISSION APPOINTED TO CARRY OUT A SERIOUS STUDY ON THE MATTER OF GAMBLING'S IMPACT ON PENNSYLVANIA. THE PUBLIC, BEFORE VOTING ON ANY REFERENDUM, MUST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND HEARINGS, TO OPENLY DEBATE, AND TO READ THE RESULTS OF A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO GAMBLING IN PENNSYLVANIA AND TO LEARN WHAT EFFECTS THE

LEGALIZATION OF ANY ONE, TWO OR THREE OF THE TYPES OF GAMBLING LISTED IN HOUSE BILL 295 WOULD HAVE ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF PENNSYLVANIA.

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS THAT THIS MATTER IS FAR TOO SERIOUS TO BE ACTED UPON SWIFTLY WITH ONLY SUPERFICIAL PUBLIC EDUCATION.

SPECIFICALLY, "THE PATRIOT-NEWS" IN A MAY 15, 1997 EDITORIAL STATED:

IF PENNSYLVANIANS ARE GOING TO LEGALIZE SLOTS AT THE TRACK, THEY ARE APPROVING A MODIFIED FORM OF CASINO GAMBLING. THEY NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT REVENUES AND SOCIAL IMPACT.

TO DO THIS, THEY NEED A REFERENDUM - TWO, ACTUALLY, BOTH AT THE STATE AND COUNTY LEVEL - AND ABOVE ALL, MORE TIME TO STUDY THIS CRITICAL ISSUE.

ALSO, IN A MAY 11, 1997, EDITORIAL, THE **TRIBUNE-REVIEW** WROTE IN REFERRING TO THE SUDDEN MOVE TO

PLACE SLOTS AT RACE TRACKS:

PERHAPS IT'S TIME THAT PENNSYLVANIANS
DEMAND AN END TO GOVERNMENT BY LEGISLATIVE
SURPRISE.

APPROVAL OF THIS ISSUE WILL FOREVER CHANGE
THE COMMONWEALTH'S SOCIAL FABRIC. THUS,
EXTENSIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS SHOULD BE
DEMANDED AND A THOROUGH AND PUBLIC DEBATE
OF THE ISSUE - OF AT LEAST SEVERAL MONTHS'
DURATION - SHOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE
MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTE.

IT IS OBVIOUS WHY PROPONENTS OF GAMBLING WANT
TO MOVE QUICKLY. THEY KNOW THAT UNBIASED, OBJECTIVE
STUDIES SHOW THAT THE APPARENT BENEFITS OF
LEGALIZING GAMBLING ARE OUTWEIGHED BY THE NEGATIVE
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS. FOR EXAMPLE, A STUDY
BY THE BETTER GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION, A CHICAGO-
BASED WATCHDOG, FOUND THAT THE SOCIAL COSTS OF
COMPULSIVE GAMBLING, COMBINED WITH THE

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENFORCEMENT EXPENDITURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE RIVERBOAT CASINOS IN ILLINOIS, EXCEED \$250 MILLION EACH YEAR. ALSO, AN ADDED \$240 MILLION IS LOST BY BUSINESSES IN COMMUNITIES NEAR THE 10 FLOATING CASINOS AS MONEY THAT ORDINARILY WOULD BE SPENT WITHIN THE LOCAL ECONOMY IS BET ON SLOT MACHINES AND OTHER GAMBLING DEVICES. AN AUTHOR OF THE STUDY TOLD THE **PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER** THAT PENNSYLVANIA WOULD EXPERIENCE SIMILAR RESULTS IF IT LEGALIZED RIVERBOAT GAMBLING. CONSEQUENTLY, IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT YOU TAKE THE LEAD TO STOP THE MOVE TOWARD A VOTE BEFORE THIS ISSUE IS DEEPLY STUDIED.

IF YOU FOLLOWED THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE A FEW WEEKS AGO ON THE ISSUE OF ALLOWING THE PLACEMENT OF SLOT MACHINES AT RACE TRACKS, YOU WOULD HAVE HEARD THE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH EXPLAINING HOW HIS OBSERVATIONS AND STUDY OVER ABOUT A DECADE HAVE CHANGED HIM FROM A SUPPORTER OF GAMBLING TO AN OPPONENT OF THE PROPOSAL THAT

WAS THEN BEFORE THE HOUSE. AS A LONG-STANDING OBSERVER OF HOUSE ACTION WITH RESPECT TO GAMBLING LEGISLATION, I WAS PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY THE CAUCUS CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS; FOR I CLEARLY REMEMBER SEEING HIS NAME AS A COSPONSOR OF VARIOUS GAMBLING BILLS DURING THE 1980'S.

THE CAUCUS CHAIRMAN ADMITTED THAT STUDY ENLIGHTENED HIM ABOUT THE MANY NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF LEGALIZING MORE GAMBLING.

WE MUST TAKE NOTICE OF THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT IS PRESENTLY BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD LEGAL GAMBLING IN PENNSYLVANIA. OVER 1.6 BILLION DOLLARS WAS SPENT IN 1995 ON THE STATE LOTTERY. MOREOVER, CONSIDERING LIVE RACING EVENTS, SIMULCASTING, CALL-A-BET AND OFF-TRACK BETTING, OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS ARE WAGERED ON RACING-RELATED ACTIVITIES. IN ADDITION, MILLIONS MORE ARE SPENT ON BINGO AND OTHER SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE. THAT'S A TOTAL OF OVER THREE BILLION DOLLARS PRESENTLY BEING SPENT ON LEGAL

GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA; AND WE'D ALL BE CONSIDERED TERRIBLY NAIVE IF WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT BECAUSE IT'S NOT TAXED AND OFFERS BETTER ODDS TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF MORE EXPERIENCED GAMBLERS, ILLEGAL GAMBLING ACTIVITIES CONTINUE TO FLOURISH. IN FACT, THE EXPERIENCE OF LEGALIZING GAMBLING, AS PREVIOUSLY ARGUED BY GAMBLING ADVOCATES, DOES NOT DRIVE OUT ILLEGAL GAMBLING. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, AS REPORTED, IN ROBERT GOODMAN'S BOOK THE LUCK BUSINESS:

IT IS OFTEN ARGUED THAT GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN GAMBLING ELIMINATES THE ROLE OF ORGANIZED CRIME AND SHIFTS ILLEGAL GAMBLING DOLLARS INTO PUBLIC COFFERS. WHILE THIS IS PARTIALLY TRUE, THE CREATION OF A LARGER CONSUMER POOL OF GAMBLERS THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF LEGAL GAMBLING ALSO PROVIDES NEW PLAYERS FOR CONTINUED ILLEGAL ACTIVITY. ORGANIZED CRIME, BY OFFERING BETTER ODDS AND NONTAXABLE PAYMENTS, HAS REMAINED AN ACTIVE SUPPLIER OF

GAMBLING PRODUCTS WITH ITS OWN MARKET NICHE. IN 1992, BOB WALSH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE FBI IN CHICAGO, TOLD THE CHICAGO METRO ETHICS COALITION, THAT IN SPITE OF LEGALIZATION, ORGANIZED CRIME HAD BEEN CONTINUOUSLY INVOLVED IN GAMBLING. GAMBLING GENERATES NEW GAMBLING, SAID WALSH. 'THE MORE ACCEPTED IT BECOMES, THE MORE ALL FORMS OF GAMBLING BENEFIT.'

THEREFORE, WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT OVER 3 BILLION DOLLARS IS NOW BEING SPENT ON LEGAL GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA, ISN'T IT ESSENTIAL THAT WE, SUPPOSEDLY A DELIBERATIVE BODY OF LEGISLATORS, PAUSE TO ASSESS THE PRESENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS THESE ACTIVITIES ARE HAVING ON PENNSYLVANIANS AND THROUGH ADDITIONAL STUDY PROJECT WHAT EFFECTS MORE LEGAL GAMBLING WOULD HAVE ON OUR COMMONWEALTH?

THE FACT IS THERE EXISTS NO PUBLIC MANDATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FORMS OF GAMBLING. AS

PROFESSOR GOODMAN STATES IN THE LUCK BUSINESS, "THE RUSH TO LEGALIZE CASINO GAMBLING WAS NOT THE RESULT OF ANY POPULAR DRIVE FOR MORE GAMBLING IN AMERICA. IN SPITE OF THE ENORMOUS EXPANSION OF CASINOS SINCE THE LATE 1980'S, OUR RESEARCH AT THE UNITED STATES GAMBLING STUDY DID NOT UNCOVER A SINGLE GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION LOBBYING FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GAMBLE."

UNLIKE THE PUBLIC CALL TO END PROHIBITION OR THE GROUNDSWELL THAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPING IN PENNSYLVANIA FOR TAX REFORM, THERE IS NO PUBLIC GROUP IN THE COMMONWEALTH CLAMORING FOR THE LEGALIZATION OF MORE FORMS OF GAMBLING. ONLY THE GAMBLING PROFITEERS ARE LOBBYING TO IMPOSE MORE LEGALIZED GAMBLING ON PENNSYLVANIANS WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A THOROUGH AND SERIOUS STUDY OF GAMBLING'S PRESENT AND FUTURE IMPACTS.

CONSEQUENTLY, HOUSE BILL 295 SHOULD BE HELD IN ABEYANCE UNTIL THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PUBLIC

HAVE COMPLETED A DETAILED STUDY OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE.

THAT IS, HOUSE 295 MIGHT APPROPRIATELY BE CONSIDERED MONTHS FROM NOW, BUT EVEN THEN THE FORMAT OF HOUSE BILL 295 NEEDS TO BE ALTERED. SPECIFICALLY, PLACING THREE MAJOR FORMS OF GAMBLING ON ONE BALLOT TENDS TO DILUTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH ONE. SOME VOTERS LOOK UPON THE THREE BALLOT QUESTIONS LIKE MULTIPLE CHOICE TEXT QUESTIONS, AND THERE WOULD BE A TENDENCY AMONG SOME TO SELECT THE "BEST OF THE THREE" OR THE LEAST OFFENSIVE ON THE LIST.

ALSO, THE LANGUAGE OF QUESTION THREE ON PAGE TWO, LINES 12 THROUGH 14 TENDS TO DISGUISE WHAT TYPE OF GAMBLING COULD TAKE PLACE IN TAVERNS IF SUCH AN ITEM WERE APPROVED. THE WORDS "LIMITED FORMS OF GAMING AT TAVERNS" MAKE IT APPEAR AS IF CERTAIN SMALL GAMES OF CHANCE WOULD BE LEGALIZED WHEN, IN FACT, WHAT THE TAVERN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SEEKING IS THE

MOST ADDICTIVE AND COSTLY FORM OF GAMBLING -
ELECTRONIC MACHINES.

TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEED FOR
A SERIOUS STUDY OF THE TRUE IMPACTS OF GAMBLING, I
MUST PRESENT INFORMATION GARNERED FROM OTHER
RESEARCH AND STUDIES.

IN PARTICULAR, MUCH RESEARCH CONDUCTED
FOLLOWING THE LEGALIZATION OF GAMBLING IN OTHER
PLACES REVEALS THAT MONEY SPENT ON GAMBLING HURTS
THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

IN STUDYING 10 ILLINOIS COUNTIES WHERE CASINO
RIVERBOATS WERE LEGALIZED IN THE EARLY 1990'S, EARL
GRINOLS, A UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ECONOMIST, FOUND
THAT RIVERBOATS CREATED NO ADDITIONAL JOBS. THEY
MERELY SIPHONED JOBS FROM EXISTING SECTORS OF THE
ECONOMY.

AS EXPLAINED IN THE LUCK BUSINESS, A BUSINESS
SURVEY IN NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI; TAKEN A FEW MONTHS
AFTER THE FIRST RIVERBOAT OPENED FOR GAMBLING,

REVEALED THAT OVER 70 PERCENT OF LOCAL ESTABLISHMENTS REPORTED 10 TO 20 PERCENT DECREASES IN SALES. A YEAR LATER, MANY NEARBY RESTAURANTS AND TAVERNS HAD CLOSED AND EVENING ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS DURING THE CITY'S PEAK TOURIST SEASON HAD DECLINED OVER 20 PERCENT.

IN ESSENCE, AS ROBERT GOODMAN REPORTS IN HIS STUDY OF GAMBLING'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES, THE GRADUAL SHIFT OF PEOPLE'S DISCRETIONARY SPENDING TO GAMBLING ACTIVITIES AND AWAY FROM OTHER PURCHASES PRODUCES A NEGATIVE ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER. BECAUSE LESS CONSUMER SPENDING IS DIRECTED TOWARD LOCAL BUSINESSES, THEIR PROFITS DECLINE; AND A VARIETY OF EMPLOYEES RANGING FROM CLERKS TO MANAGERS EXPERIENCE REDUCTIONS IN HOURS WORKED OR ARE LAID OFF. THESE UNDEREMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WORKERS NOW HAVE LESS DISCRETIONARY INCOME TO SPEND ON OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES, WHICH ALSO FURTHER REDUCES THE

DEMAND FOR WORKERS IN OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES.

BESIDES CANNIBALIZING THE LOCAL ECONOMY, THE INCREASED LEGALIZATION OF GAMBLING ADVERSELY AFFECTS GAMBLING ENTERPRISES ALREADY LEGALIZED SUCH AS STATE LOTTERIES.

AS ROBERT GOODMAN STATES IN THE LUCK BUSINESS, SOON AFTER RIVERBOAT AND CASINO GAMBLING WAS LEGALIZED IN IOWA, ILLINOIS AND CONNECTICUT, LOTTERY SALES AND RACING REVENUES IN THESE STATES DECREASED. FURTHERMORE, A UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE STUDY CONCLUDED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF CASINOS IN ATLANTIC CITY RESULTED IN A 34 PERCENT DECLINE IN BETTING AT NEW JERSEY'S HORSE-RACING TRACKS DURING THE DECADE FROM 1978 TO 1988.

IN ADDITION TO THE NEED TO STUDY THE ECONOMIC IMPACT THAT NEW FORMS OF GAMBLING WOULD HAVE ON PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES, THERE MUST BE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THE SOCIAL IMPACT THAT MORE GAMBLING WOULD HAVE ON THE COMMONWEALTH.

IN APRIL, 1995, AN IMPACT STUDY OF WISCONSIN'S 17 TRIBAL CASINOS SHOWED THAT THE MONEY GENERATED BY THE INDIAN CASINOS WERE MAKING THE TRIBES MORE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT; HOWEVER, THE REST OF THE STATE WAS PAYING AN ENORMOUS PRICE. THIS STUDY, CONDUCTED BY A TEAM OF UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA AND GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS, ESTIMATED THAT WHEN THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH COMPULSIVE GAMBLING WERE TABULATED THROUGH CALCULATING INCREASED WELFARE, LOST WORK PRODUCTIVITY, EMBEZZLEMENT AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTED BY THOSE IN DEBT TO GAMBLING, THE CASINOS WERE COSTING WISCONSIN BETWEEN \$318 and \$493 MILLION PER YEAR.

AS STATE-SANCTIONED GAMBLING EXPANDS INTO ADDITIONAL COMMUNITIES, MORE PEOPLE, WHO ORDINARILY WOULD NOT HAVE GAMBLED, ARE RECRUITED INTO GAMBLING, ESPECIALLY THROUGH GAMBLING MACHINES. IN 1994, VALERIE LORENZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING, FOUND THAT "THE NUMBER OF PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLERS IS RISING ON A DAILY BASIS AS MORE AND MORE GAMBLING BECOMES AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE."

ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR GOODMAN, RESEARCHERS NOW CALL GAMBLING THE FASTEST-GROWING TEENAGE ADDICTION. MOREOVER, HOWARD J. SHAFFER, DIRECTOR OF THE HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL CENTER FOR ADDICTION STUDIES, PREDICTED, "WE WILL FACE IN THE NEXT DECADE OR SO MORE PROBLEMS WITH YOUTH GAMBLING THEN WE'LL FACE WITH DRUG USE."

THERE ARE MANY ACCOUNTS REVEALING THAT WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF GAMBLING TO A COMMUNITY THERE IS A CONCOMITANT INCREASE IN COMPULSIVE GAMBLING, FAMILY DISRUPTIONS AND CRIME. IN FACT, A 1996 **U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT** ANALYSIS SHOWED THE CRIME RATE IN CASINO LOCATIONS TO BE NEARLY DOUBLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

IT IS SUFFICIENT TO EXPLAIN WHAT RONALD A. RENO, A

SOCIAL RESEARCH ANALYST, FOUND WHEN EXAMINING THE NUMBER OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AMERICA. SPECIFICALLY, A 1989 SURVEY REVEALED THAT 1.7 PERCENT OF IOWANS HAD A GAMBLING PROBLEM. THE NEXT YEAR THE STATE LEGALIZED RIVERBOAT GAMBLING, AND A NEW STUDY IN 1995 INDICATED THAT THE NUMBER OF PROBLEM GAMBLERS HAD MORE THAN TRIPLED.

IN TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS IN 1996, EARL GRINOLS, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ECONOMIST, STATED THAT CASINOS EARN MORE THAN HALF THEIR REVENUE FROM PROBLEM AND PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLERS.

I COULD MAKE A LIST OF NUMEROUS CASES I HAVE ACCUMULATED IN MY READING ON THE SUBJECT OF GAMBLING ADDICTION. HOWEVER, I'LL CONCLUDE WITH ONLY A FEW TO SHOW THE RANGE OF PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES ARE DESTROYED THROUGH COMPULSIVE GAMBLING.

IN 1994, JEFFREY BLOOMBERG, THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR THE SMALL TOWN OF DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA, PRESENTED TO A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE STUDYING

THE IMPACTS OF GAMBLING AN ESPECIALLY DEVASTATING ACCOUNT OF HOW ORDINARY PEOPLE'S LIVES HAD BEEN RUINED AFTER CASINOS WERE LEGALIZED THERE. MR. BLOOMBERG SAID, "WE HAVE SEEN INDIVIDUALS WHO, PRIOR TO THEIR EXPOSURE TO GAMBLING, HAD NO CRIMINAL HISTORY, WHO WERE NOT JUNKIES OR ALCOHOLICS, MANY OF WHOM HAD GOOD JOBS, WHO BECAME HOOKED ON SLOT-MACHINES AND AFTER LOSING ALL THEIR ASSETS AND RUNNING ALL CREDIT RESOURCES TO THEIR MAXIMUM BEGAN COMMITTING SOME TYPE OF CRIME TO SUPPORT THEIR ADDICTION."

"I THINK OF THIS PIZZA RESTAURANT MANAGER WHO HAD A SPOTLESS RECORD AND EMBEZZLED \$45,000 FROM HIS EMPLOYERS," RECALLED BLOOMBERG, "OR THE GAMING BUSINESS BOOK-KEEPER WHO, HAVING RUN UP THOUSANDS IN DEBTS, COMMITTED SUICIDE OR MOST TRAGICALLY THE TECHNICAL SERGEANT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE WHO, PRIOR TO GAMING HAD AN EXEMPLARY TEN-YEAR MILITARY CAREER, WHO BECAME HOOKED ON SLOT

MACHINES AND EVENTUALLY MURDERED A CASINO OPERATOR IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO RETRIEVE FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS IN BAD CHECKS HE HAD WRITTEN TO THE CASINOS. SERGEANT COBB IS NOW SERVING A LIFE SENTENCE WITHOUT PAROLE AT THE POTENTIAL COST OF OVER A MILLION DOLLARS TO SOUTH DAKOTA TAXPAYERS NOT TO MENTION THE LOSS IN TRAINING DOLLARS INVESTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR MOST TRAGICALLY THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE."

IN A MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE ARTICLE ENTITLED "GAMBLING'S TOLL IN MINNESOTA" BY CHRIS ISON, THE AUTHOR WRITES ABOUT A 49 YEAR OLD MOTHER OF THREE WHO WOULD NOT LEAVE A CASINO DESPITE BEING PAGED BY HER 21 YEAR OLD SON. THIS PARTICULAR WEEKEND IN MAY OF 1994, SHE WAS QUITE DEPRESSED BECAUSE SHE WAS IN DANGER OF BEING FIRED AFTER 11 YEARS AS AN ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL. ON MONDAY, HER FOURTH STRAIGHT DAY AT THE CASINO, SHE RETURNED HOME BROKE AND MORE DEPRESSED THAN EVER. TWO

DAYS LATER CATHERINE AVINA COMMITTED SUICIDE.

THE SAME NEWS ARTICLE CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF JEFF COPELAND, A 21 YEAR OLD FROM SUBURBAN MINNEAPOLIS, WHO GAMBLED AWAY \$20,000 EARMARKED FOR COLLEGE. "IT RUINS YOUR LIFE," HE SAYS, "AND PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND. I THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE. IT'S THE EASIEST WAY TO GET OUT OF IT."

THERE ARE MANY MORE CASES WITH NAMES AND TRAGIC ENDINGS, BUT I'LL TERMINATE ON THIS NOTE:

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA IS SUPPOSED TO BE A DELIBERATIVE BODY WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF ITS CITIZENS PLACED ABOVE ALL SPECIAL INTERESTS. IF EVER THERE WAS A TIME FOR SERIOUS AND LENGTHY DELIBERATIONS AND CONTINUED STUDY TO MAKE SURE PENNSYLVANIA'S BEST INTERESTS ARE SERVED INSTEAD OF THE BEST INTERESTS OF A SPECIAL FEW, THE TIME IS NOW.

WE MUST NOT ABDICATE OUR SACRED RESPONSIBILITY TO DO THE PEOPLE'S BUSINESS CAREFULLY. THEREFORE,

WE MUST REJECT ALL GAMBLING-RELATED LEGISLATION IN
FAVOR OF A SERIOUS, FULL BLOWN STUDY OF GAMBLING AS
IT NOW IMPACTS ON PENNSYLVANIA AND AS IT WOULD
IMPACT IF MORE FORMS ARE LEGALIZED. WE SHOULD DO
NO LESS!