

SENATOR WARNER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, a couple, three comments on some of the things that have been suggested. Again, as it was my...certainly my intent not, in introducing this legislation, not to attempt, in fact I very studiously avoided any attempt to tie into any past contribution that may or may not have occurred because that was not my interest. My interest rose innocently and generally from the articles that I cited, and the fact that it was indicated in...and I might read even from this report that was done in New Jersey by a recommendation that pertained to casino gambling but their quote was that contributions by casino licensees, both corporate and individual, give the appearance they are attempting to bribe political influence and favoritism and, in fact, had a very real potential of causing such favoritism to occur, and the State Commission of Investigation is inclined to recommend an absolute prohibition against any licensee of the state regulator authority, whether it be an individual, corporate, or so-called holding company to make contributions to any political candidate, party, or campaign organization in the state either directly or indirectly. It is a much more restrictive proposal. In fact, they, I believe as I recall, prohibit any employee, which doesn't go that far. Again, it's, the basic issue, which I know it is hard sometimes to separate, but what one is attempting, and I think legitimately in this area, is to avoid even the allegation that someone can make of the appearance of inappropriate or "improprietary" type action on the part of someone in an elected office. The prohibition for campaign contributions in this limited area are the ones that the court's upheld. I am not sure that you could make these kinds of restrictions to others, but generally, when I think of other state contracts, most, in most cases at least, the specifications are fairly well defined, not very subjective. In the case of awarding of a gambling license to operate something for the state, they, too, can be somewhat defined but I suspect a little more subjective than the horsepower of a motor, or the number of square yards of concrete. Those things are very easy to define. I think it would be good public policy. I think it's a case of an opportunity to avoid the appearance of evil, not that evil exists, but to avoid the appearance. In my opinion, from my association with public life, it is more important sometimes than evil itself, certainly much more difficult to defend against it because the appearance tends to...you can't prove that you haven't done something sometimes as readily as if it is flatly prohibited, it is not an issue. I think it would be good public policy. There are