

SENATOR JENSEN: Madam President, members of the body, I just feel that we need to think a little bit about the history of gambling and also the future of gambling. Actually in the 1800's many states in the United States had gambling at that time. For those of you who don't know, they even...Washington, D.C. was built with lottery funds. But it was after that that they found out that gambling was not something that should be promoted by government. And one by one all the states dropped off until there was no state that even had lottery at that time. But in thinking of the future I think we also need to think of the youth that we have here in this state, and gambling does pose a double threat to Nebraska's youth, not only are many victimized by the members family involvement, but young people as a group are themselves especially susceptible to the enticements of gambling. In fact several experts on teen trends assert that gambling related problems may soon overshadow drug use as a preliminary destructive addiction among adolescents. In a study by Howard Schaffer (phonetic), on the center of addictions, studies predicts that we will face in the next decade or so more problems with youth gambling than we will face with drug use, particularly illicit drug use. Teens with the most access to gambling appear to be the most vulnerable, and that's what we're going to do if we expand gambling here in Nebraska. Nowhere has this been more evident than in New Jersey, where an Atlantic City gambling complex has profoundly influenced the behavior of its local youth. In a recent survey some 3,000 high school students in New Jersey...a study said that more than 90 percent had been gambling within the last year, almost one-third reported gambling on a weekly basis. According to the New Jersey Casino Control Commission, roughly 200,000 potential underage gamblers are denied access to Atlantic City casinos each year, an additional 25,000 minors who manage to get inside are later evicted. And of course lottery attracts an exceptionally high percentage of underage players. A survey in Massachusetts found that of the youth 40 percent...47 percent of seventh graders had purchased lottery tickets, 47 percent, three-quarters have done so by the time they are seniors in high schools. Duran Jacobs (phonetic), a pioneer in treating compulsive gambler behaviors, asserts that students are 2.5 times as likely as adults to become problem gamblers. He also said that the figure on results from a survey of 2,700 high school students in 4 states found that his findings mirror those of other researchers who contend that the rate of problem gambling behavior is doubled for teens. Then we