

Schellpeper amendment at this point. Thank you

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Jensen, followed by Senators Beutler and Schellpeper.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. A few people have asked why did I become involved in this? Why did I start to work against the gambling issue? And I thought I'd start off by relating a couple of stories to you that have come to me. One, a year ago, in the middle of January, I received a call from a young man, a young man who I've known since birth, around 30 years old, he has his own business, married, a couple children, doing quite well. And he called and he said he had a problem. And I said, well what is it? And he said, well last fall, for the first time in his life, he began to do some betting on parlays on football games on weekends. And he said the unfortunate part about that is I won a couple of times. And he began to get more involved and he was calling me on a Sunday evening to tell me that Wednesday was settlement day with his bookie, and that he owed \$14,000, and he wanted to know what to do. He had even gone so far as to talk to a police officer and maybe turning in the bookie. I inquired as to who the bookie was, and it was an 18-year-old, a young man who is working at one of Omaha's largest employers, as a matter of fact the son of an executive of that employer. And I told the young man who was calling me that if he loved his wife and family maybe he should reconsider, and whether it would be right or wrong he had entered into a contract, and I advised him to pay the money. He said, I don't have it. I said, then go to the bank and borrow it, which he did. And so all of 1995 he spent paying off this debt that he had incurred to a bookie. Prior to that time I was somewhat ambivalent to expanded gambling in Nebraska. I have been to Las Vegas, I've certainly played cards and participated in gambling activities, and I, like many people, thought that well I really don't enjoy that sort of thing anymore, but if people want to do it fine. But with his call I began to look at some of the ramifications of the gambling situation. I began to study, I began to read. The more I read, the more I studied, and the more I researched the more that I saw the problems, not only within this state, but in all states. And then I got a letter from a 56-year-old grandmother who said, I'm one of those addicted gamblers that we are hearing so much about. Since opening in Onawa, Sloan, Bluffs Run Casino, and now two riverboats, oh boy, I don't know