

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Brown. Senator Pirsch, on the bracket motion.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Senator Crosby, and members of the body. We've talked a lot today about the issue, not only of the expanded gambling, itself, but of putting it to the vote of the people, and I think that's been a good discussion. And we talked about the economic disaster, and we've talked about the rise in the crime, and we've talked about the making gambling easier is really making it a predator of the poor. But what really has struck me as I have read, as I have listened, was a quote that I read by someone, and I can't tell you the name, I am sorry. But, essentially, that quote was that gambling is the only addictive behavior that we are actually promoting now for young people. We have tried and tried on the floor of this Legislature to address the tobacco problems with young people, and to discourage them from establishing that life-long addictive habit. We have racked our brains to try to find an end to the alcohol addiction that starts so young in our juveniles, and we have despaired and we have deplored that kind of behavior in our young people, and try to discourage them from becoming addicted to tobacco and alcohol. But, truly, we are saying, and, of course, young people won't be voting on this issue, that, hey, it's okay. We will continue, we started with horse racing, which, of course, quite frankly, is my...is one of the forms of gaming that I enjoy, but I enjoy watching the horses, not putting my money down on them. We have...we went from horse racing, where we could gamble every half an hour, to dog races, which we could gamble every fifteen minutes, and then to keno, where we could gamble every fifteen to thirty minutes, but I'll tell you, those slot machines, they're wonderful. You can just sit there in front of them and keep feeding your money in as fast as you can. I think that is a real addiction. And, again, what are we doing to our juveniles? Those social reverberations of gambling are felt by numerous individuals, but the ones that are probably the most affected are the children in the family of those who become addicts. Henry Lazour (phonetic) observes that the rates of child abuse are higher among those families with compulsive gamblers. In Deadwood, South Dakota, reports of domestic abuse and child neglect have risen by more than 50 percent since the advent of legalized gambling there. The Gulf Coast Women's Center in Biloxi, Mississippi reported the doubling in the number of battered...