

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

February 5, 2004 LR 14

and others.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. I'd like to follow up on what Senator Hartnett was asking me a little while ago and follow up on some of his comments. And, Senator Hartnett, you didn't give me a lot of time to respond. That's why you got a one-word answer. But I think I've said several times on the record that I think that we would need to do something fairly substantial for dealing with compulsive gamblers. But I do want to emphasize that we have been told by several people who deal with compulsive gamblers that we've already got it in this state. And I would like to read to you from the transcript from the hearing before the General Affairs Committee at which Jerry Boekemp (phonetic) or Bauerkemper, who is Executive Director of the Nebraska Council on Compulsive Gambling, this is what he said, Senator Hartnett. He said here's what we know from the same people that are doing the 3 to 5 percent who are going to have a problem. What you're going to find is that 3 to 5 percent of the population is going to have a problem regardless, and that's probably not going to go up and it's probably not going to go down. The only way to change that is to have an entire public health approach to reduce that. So if you allow that, if you take Grand Island or Kearney or Scottsbluff, casino gambling isn't the largest piece of the...he says of the people that call, I think that's not right, but the people that go into treatment. It's keno and lottery and sports betting and things like that. The gambling is already there. They are just choosing that. Now if they were to choose casinos versus the other, it's the same percent. And so what you're going to find is a flip, possibly, in the percent, and with the proximity of casinos, you're going to have a higher percentage of the people that are going to report casino gambling. But that doesn't change the percents. It's always going to be 3 to 5 percent. And the casino industry, the gaming industry will talk about it being 1 percent, and you know the antigambling people will talk about it being 5 percent. And we just talk about it being somewhere in the middle three. And that is from the fellow who works with compulsive gambling all the time. And he wasn't there to speak in favor of or against expansion of gambling. He was trying to share with us the facts. Senator Erdman, I think I'd like to respond just a little bit further to