

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

May 23, 2005

LB 332

CLERK: Senator McDonald, would move to amend the committee amendments, Mr. President, with AM1656. (Legislative Journal page 1676.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator McDonald, to open on your amendment to the committee amendments.

SENATOR McDONALD: Gambling is a controversial subject. There are those who believe gambling is an economic positive for Nebraska, and those who believe gambling causes more social and economic problems than any amount of revenue produced. The Legislature has struggled with gambling for the last 20 years. Horse racing, keno, lottery, and charitable gaming have all been approved by both the Legislature and the citizens of Nebraska. One thing pro- and antigambling opponents agree--gambling does cause gambling addictions in Nebraska families. Since 1992, this body has provided revenues to help provide services for gambling addicted families. Current revenues for problem gambling services equals approximately \$700,000 per year. In contrast, substance abuse treatment is funded in excess of \$13 million per year. Gambling has served as a positive fund-raiser for many groups for many years in the United States. The point is, gambling has been legal, illegal, moral, immoral, positive and negative, but throughout history problem and pathological gambling has existed. Over 800 Nebraskans sought help for problem gaming in 2004. This number is expected to increase for the tenth straight year in 2005. Legal forms of gambling in Nebraska that are current are the lottery, Powerball, scratch-offs, bingo, pickle cards, pull tabs, keno, horse racing, tribal gaming, charitable gaming, and sweepstakes. Those are all viable forms of gambling here in Nebraska. But we also have illegal forms of gambling: sports pools, bets through bookies, Internet gaming, card games, gray machines, number games, cock fighting, dog fighting. So it doesn't make any difference if you have legalized gambling; you know that there are always going to be some forms of illegal gambling in our state. The social costs: 3 percent of Nebraskans have or will develop a gaming problem in their lifetime; 48,000 Nebraskans will develop a gambling problem in their lifetime with the social costs per year for a person with a gambling problem is