

WELCOMING THE FIRST-EVER DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WNBA TEAM—THE WASHINGTON MYSTICS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to welcome the first-ever D.C. Women's National Basketball Association team to our nation's capital. This moment comes on top of other news that the District for the first time received acclaim as the best place to live in the East from Money Magazine. Together these firsts affirm that Washington, D.C. is truly a special city, and not only because D.C. is our nation's capital.

Tomorrow, I will join thousands of fans at the MCI Center to see our first home game against Utah. The District is very proud of this team, which will be led by standout shooting guard Nikki McCray, the lead scorer on the 1996 gold medal winning U.S. Olympic team. Head Coach Jim Lewis promises a full-court offense, using the fast break and aggressive defense, which are sure to be exciting viewing for the fans here in Washington.

I would also like to commend and thank team owner, Abe Pollin, Irene Pollin and Susan O'Malley, president of the Mystics organization, for their vision and commitment to making women's professional basketball a reality here in the District.

This team is important to the fans here in the District, including the many young girls among them who look to these outstanding women athletes as role models. Last year, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Title IX and today the fruits of this achievement are being recognized. This important legislation contributed in large part to the participation of more than 100,000 women in intercollegiate athletics in 1997, a fourfold increase since 1971. In the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, American women won a record 19 Olympic medals. Thousands of women today, including many WNBA players have benefitted from athletic scholarships that simply were unheard of before Title IX. The number of girls participating in high school athletics has risen from fewer than 300,000 in 1971 to 2.4 million today. Girls' participation in high school basketball increased 300% from 1971 to 1995! Research suggests that girls who participate in sports are more likely to experience academic success and to graduate from high school than those who do not play sports. Half of all girls who participate in sports experience higher-than-average levels of self-esteem and less depression.

We welcome the Washington Mystics' team—Nikki McCray, Heidi Burge, Deborah Carter, Keri Chaconas, Tammy Jackson, Penny Moore, Murriel Page, Alessandra Santos de Oliveira, Adreinne Shuler, Leila de Souza Sobral, and Rita Williams. We look forward to their contributions to the community and to the basketball profession. Go Mystics!

TRIBUTE TO MR. ELLIOT ROBSON

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring an accomplished young man from Memphis, Tennessee, Mr. Elliot Robson. As a student at White Station High School in Memphis, Tennessee, Elliot has excelled in all of his subjects, but he has developed exceptional competence in history.

This week, Mr. Robson is participating in the National History Day Competition at University of Maryland at College Park where he is competing with approximately 78 of his peers for the Senior Individual Exhibit Award. This national competition is the culmination of a rigorous set of contests at the local and state level where middle, junior, and high school students conduct primary research, write papers, and prepare media presentations on significant historical events.

National History Day is the product of a year-long educational program aimed at fostering achievement and intellectual growth among students from all backgrounds and regions of the nation. This year, the National History Day theme is "Migrations in History: People, Ideas, Culture." Mr. Robson chose to study Jewish immigration, a topic about which he gained knowledge during his education at Beth Shalom Religious School.

Mr. Robson is to be commended for his success. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring an individual who through his efforts in this competition has demonstrated exceptional educational achievement. I urge Mr. Robson to continue to build upon this strong educational base and to continue to provide a model for other students around the country. Please join me in commending Mr. Robson and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

GAMBLING AND AMERICA'S YOUTH

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to call to my colleagues' attention a story on the front page of the June 16 New York Times titled, "Those Seductive Snake Eyes: Tales of Growing Up Gambling." The bad news is that gambling is growing. The worse news is that gambling addiction is growing fastest among young people.

The article says, "There is a growing concern among experts on compulsive gambling about the number of youths who—confronted with state lotteries, the growth of family-oriented casinos and sometimes lax enforcement of wagering laws—gamble at an earlier and earlier age and gamble excessively."

The story quotes a recent Harvard Medical School study which was conducted by Dr. Howard Shaffer which found that the rate of problem gambling among adolescents is more than twice the rate for adults.

This article is shocking. It cites stories of young people who have hit the bottom young—and all because of gambling.

One young man got hooked on gambling as a teenager. The problem was so bad, his parents had to put locks on all the rooms and closets in the house so he wouldn't run out and sell the family belongings to gamble. He has been to prison twice for credit card fraud and writing false checks. Later in the article, he talks about how he first got interested in gambling. When he was growing up, he used to help his grandmother pick lottery numbers at a neighborhood store, and he used to go with her on her gambling trips to Atlantic City. He would wait for her outside the casino, peering in the window and wishing he could play, too.

The article talks about another young person who started gambling when he was 13 years old. With his buddies, this teen used to pay craps near his house, place bets on pick-up basketball games, and play a dice game called "see-low." Now he is in a treatment center for drug and gambling problems.

The New York Times piece said that in one high school in the Northeast U.S., kids said they knew a fellow student who was a professional bookie who booked bets right there at their high school. Amazingly, that school set up a mock-casino as part of its prom night festivities. The school principal said the students had no problem with the various games—they knew them well and apparently needed no coaching.

But this is a problem everywhere, in all of America. According to the article, a Louisiana State University study conducted last year found that among Louisiana young people aged 18 to 21, one in seven were, and I quote, "problem gamblers, some of them pathological—youths with a chronic and progressive psychological disorder characterized by an emotional dependence on gambling and a loss of control over their gambling."

Everyone is worried about tobacco use among teenagers, and I am, too. But we've got another problem, and we really need to pay attention.

I hope this country wakes up. I hope our governors wake up. I hope this Congress wakes up.

[From the New York Times, June 16, 1998]

THOSE SEDUCTIVE SNAKE EYES: TALES OF GROWING UP GAMBLING

(By Brett Pulley)

ATLANTIC CITY—Like a first kiss, getting the car keys for the first time or walking into a bar and buying a first drink, gambling has become a rite of passage for young people on their way to adulthood.

With casinos in 26 states and lotteries in 38, youths who have watched their parents choose from a hefty menu of legal gambling activities right in their backyards are going on dates, spending their prom nights and joining college classmates at the nearest casinos.

Along with this change in the American cultural scene, there is a growing concern among experts on compulsive gambling about the number of youths who—confronted with state lotteries, the growth of family-oriented casinos and sometimes lax enforcement of wagering laws—gamble at an earlier and earlier age and gamble excessively.

These experts fear that the proliferation of youthful gambling will lead to more cases like that of a young Philadelphia man who became an addicted gambler as a teen-ager. For the young man, now 27, the "bottom" came after he had made two trips to prison for credit card fraud and writing false

checks, attempted suicide and robbed his family.

"By the time I was 17, my parents had put a lock on everything in the house—bedrooms, pantries, closets," said the man, Michael, who is in a treatment program for compulsive gamblers. Like other addicts in recovery programs, Michael agreed to be identified only by his first name. "If I could take 30 towels out of the linen closet I would sell them for \$10 to place a bet," he recalled.

A study conducted last year by Louisiana State University found that one in seven Louisianians ages 18 to 21 were problem gamblers, some of them pathological—youths with a chronic and progressive psychological disorder characterized by an emotional dependence on gambling and a loss of control over their gambling.

Dr. Howard Shaffer, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, recently conducted an analysis of nationwide studies of gambling addiction. He found that the rate of problem gambling among adolescents was 9.4 percent, more than twice the 3.8 percent rate for adults. "Young people have been gambling since the beginning of time," he said. "But I think now, for the first time, young people are growing up having lived their entire lives in a social environment where gambling is promoted and socially accepted."

"It used to be that young people said, 'I'm 21, let's go have a drink.' Now they say, 'I'm 21, let's go gamble'."

Children get their lessons in wagering all around them—from the sports trading cards that they buy hoping to find one with an instant and large monetary value, to the chocolate chip cookie company that advertises during Saturday morning cartoons, offering \$1,000 to the lucky child who buys a package with the chocolate chips missing. And although children have been gambling for years, the fundamental principle of gambling—buying a chance to win more money—is indeed more pervasive in the lives of young people than it has ever been, some experts say.

The local governments that sponsor lotteries, as well as the casino industry and other businesses, do their part, whether intentional or not, to enhance gambling's appeal in the eyes of the young. Lottery scratch cards have bright, cartoonish graphics. Video poker machines resemble the video machines that a generation of children have grown up playing. Video arcades for children along the Boardwalk in Atlantic City include reconditioned slot machines that work just like the real thing but offer prizes instead of money. And the casino industry, by surrounding itself with amusement parks and attractions that appeal to the young, has given parents a reason to bring children along when they visit places like Atlantic City and Las Vegas, introducing adolescents to casinos and cultivating future gamblers.

"Market-savvy managers are grooming the next generation," said Marvin Roffman, a Philadelphia-based gambling analyst. "The kids go to the amusement park for the day, and when the family gets back to the hotel room, Dad is talking about how he did at the blackjack tables and Mom is talking about how she did at the slots. The kids are listening and it's making an impression on them."

With so many other things to worry about, like teen-age pregnancy, drug abuse and drunken driving, many parents and educators say they have not yet focused on gambling as one of their major concerns.

"I know we have students, probably a large number of students, who gamble," conceded William Steele, the principal of Atlantic City High School. On the desk in his outer office, there is a stack of pamphlets for students to read about compulsive gambling.

And although the school's student resource center lists counseling for problem gambling as one of the services it provides, Mr. Steele admitted that little has been done to encourage students to seek help for gambling problems. "It's not an area that we have taken a keen interest in," he said.

It is true that like other rites of passage, gambling will prove harmless in the long term for most of the young people who try it. Dr. Shaffer said that many teen-agers experimented with gambling and lost interest as they became adults. One primary reason that teen-agers are so interested in gambling, he said, is that adults have failed to inform them of the dangers. "I think it's because of the whole social milieu that we've provided these young people," he said.

THE PROBLEM—TEEN-AGERS LOSING CONTROL OF THE DICE

While much is left to be learned about the long-term impact of gambling's pervasiveness, it is already quite clear that some youths are destined to have problems with their gambling. Gambling experts estimate that 10 to 15 percent of youths who gamble become "problem gamblers," meaning they suffer some loss of control over their gambling behavior. And according to the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, of those who experience more severe problems and become pathological gamblers, most are people who start gambling before they reach 14.

One such case is that of Malcolm, a 17-year-old youth from Plainfield, N.J., who at 13 was playing craps in his neighborhood and wagering on pick-up basketball games and "see-low," a game played with three dice that is popular among teen-age gamblers.

"I always gambled, so I thought that I may have a problem," Malcolm said. After a recent conviction for marijuana possession, Malcolm was sent to New Hope Foundation, an in-patient addiction center in Marlboro, N.J. Compulsive gambling was diagnosed, and now he receives treatment for both drug and gambling problems.

Cole DiMattio, one of Malcolm's counselors at the center, said that it was Malcolm's interest in gambling that led him to drugs. "All of his gambling," Mr. DiMattio said, "looking for that crowd, brought him into the drug culture." When he was a child, Malcolm said in a recent telephone interview, his parents often played the state lottery and visited the casinos in Atlantic City. "They didn't take me with them" he said. "But I wanted to go."

Valerie Lorenz, executive director of the Compulsive Gambling Center, a treatment program in Baltimore, said that while many teen-agers were compulsive gamblers, few sought treatment while they were still in their teens. "It just takes a while for the addiction to develop," she said.

Michael is a case in point. He traced his interest in gambling back to growing up in Philadelphia, where he helped his grandmother pick lottery numbers at the corner store and joined her on frequent trips to Atlantic City, an hour's drive away. He recalled standing outside the old Playboy casino, peering through its gigantic window.

"I stood outside that glass and watched my grandmother and thought, all I ever want in life is to be on the other side of that glass," he said.

He got on the other side before long, he said, and by 15 he had used fake ID's and was a regular at the casinos, receiving free limousine rides to and from Philadelphia and complimentary hotel rooms from casinos that rarely questioned his age. Betting \$100 to \$2,000 a hand on blackjack, he financed his gambling any way he could. He said he robbed local prostitutes several times and in

a single week wrote \$35,000 in bad checks at the bank where his father was a vice president.

"One of those prostitutes could have blown my head off," he said. "But it didn't matter, as long as I was able to stay in action, that's all that mattered." He is now married, working at a bakery and living in southern New Jersey. He attends meetings of Gamblers Anonymous, he said, and has not placed a bet in four years.

But not all young problem gamblers are able to withstand the travails wrought by their excessive wagering. Last November, just after running up a \$6,000 debt betting on the World Series, Moshe Pergament, a 19-year-old college student from an affluent Long Island family, decided to end his gambling, and his life. He bought a toy handgun and drove erratically on the Long Island Expressway, causing police officers to stop him. When he was pulled over, he aimed the gun at the officers, who responded by shooting and killing him. The police said they found letters in Mr. Pergament's car that revealed the gambling debt and his intention of having the police shoot him, a phenomenon known as "suicide by cop."

THE POLICING—OFFICIALS WATCH, TRYING TO RESPOND

In parts of the country where gambling has flourished especially fast, the problem with under-age gambling is particularly acute. In Louisiana, a state that has long had horse racing and back-room card games but over the last decade has added riverboat casinos, video poker machines, a state lottery and casinos operated by American Indians, officials were jolted into action after the Louisiana State University study found that youths there were three times as likely as adults to become problem gamblers. The study, conducted by the department of psychiatry, surveyed 12,066 adolescents grades six through twelve in public and private schools in the 1996-97 school year.

The Louisiana State Legislature this year raised to 21 from 18 the minimum age for playing the state lottery and video poker machines inside more than 5,000 bars, restaurants and truck stops. Most states require lottery players to be at least 18. About half the states with casinos or video poker and slot machines allow 18-year-olds to play, while the other half, including Nevada and New Jersey, require those gamblers to be at least 21. The majority of states with pari-mutuel betting on events like horse racing, dog racing and jai alai allow 18-year-olds to bet.

In Louisiana, after a local television reporter used an undercover camera recently to show that under age gamblers were easily boarding the more than a dozen casino riverboats docked around the state, state gambling regulators are now threatening to rescind the licenses of casino operators who cannot keep under-age gamblers off their boats. In other states with legalized gambling, there are similar concerns. A citizen watchdog group in Illinois, for example, recently filmed under-age students drinking and gambling on the state's riverboats. The state gaming board then took steps to enforce age minimums.

"The truth of the matter is under-age gambling is a little like under-age drinking," said John Kennedy, Louisiana's secretary of revenue and a member of the state gaming control board. "Minors, by definition, don't have the reasoning power of adults. If you don't have the reasoning power than you can't know your limits."

Still, many teen-agers simply do not want to wait until they are old enough to gamble. In Atlantic City last year 38,502 juveniles were escorted out of the city's 12 casinos, according to the state's casino control commission. An additional 52,364 under-age would-be

gamblers tried to enter a casino and were turned away.

Too often, though, experts say, enforcement is lax.

A familiar scene played itself out recently at the Tropicana Casino here. Madelyn Carabello was locked in a hypnotic trance as she dropped coins in a slot machine and watched the reels spin to a stop. After she had been playing for an hour and a half, a security guard approached her and asked for identification, then escorted her out. If her flawlessly youthful face, striped denim jeans and tennis shoes were not enough to tip the casino's security staff that it had an under-age gambler in its midst, surely the gold pendant around her neck was a dead giveaway. It was a large heart, surrounding the numeral 19, her age.

But despite her age, it was not the first time that Ms. Carabello, a freshman at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, had gambled in a casino.

She recalled the eagerness with which she and 10 classmates boarded a gambling boat on their prom night in Miami.

"We heard that you only had to be 18" to gamble on the boat, she said. "I had heard how it was in a casino, that you could win money and stuff. I was like, 'Okay, let's do it.'"

Youths gamble because they see everyone around them doing it, not because they care that lotteries are sanctioned by the state or that casinos are legal, said Henry Lesieur, president of the Institute for Problem Gambling in Pawtucket, R.I.

"I don't think that kids are thinking at this level," he said, "whether the state sanctions it or not is irrelevant. What is relevant is that it is available in places like the grocery store and they can see it being advertised on TV."

The casino industry, keenly aware of the potential for compulsive gambling to become the bane that nicotine addiction is to the tobacco industry—and aware that a Presidential commission will issue a comprehensive report next year on the impact of gambling on the country—has recently begun to acknowledge the problem and take preemptive steps. New programs to discourage under-age gambling are being paid for and implemented by the industry, and studies on compulsive gambling, particularly among under-age gamblers, are being conducted through research grants from the industry.

"Most of the under-age gaming going on in this country is not going on inside the casinos," said Frank Fahrenkopf, president of the American Gaming Association, the casino industry's lobbying organization. He pointed out that many young people gamble on sports and play lotteries. "We are trying to reach out to that area of the population."

The interest that children develop in gambling often starts long before they are old enough to sneak into a casino. A group of Long Island parents, concerned that their young children were hooked on sports trad-

ing cards, filed lawsuits against six of the major sports trading card companies in 1996, claiming that the companies have colluded to conduct an illegal gambling enterprise by inserting rare and valuable cards that could instantly be redeemed for cash. The lawsuits, filed in New York, New Jersey, Texas and California, are pending, although one claim in Texas was dismissed by the court there. James M. Schaefer, an anthropologist at Union College in Schenectady, N.Y., who conducted research for the plaintiffs, visited card shops and sports memorabilia shows where the cards are bought and traded. What he found was that children as young as 6 were doing what is known as insert card chasing, spending \$2 to \$6 for a pack of cards, ripping them open, quickly flipping through them in search of the valuable inserts, discarding the "garbage cards" and buying more.

"The kids are driven to find a valuable insert card, and they'll spend all the money they have to find it," Mr. Schaefer said. Some gambling opponents have raised similar concerns about other seemingly benign products aimed at children, like the scratch-and-win promotions often offered by McDonald's, and a current promotion by Nabisco, which offers \$1,000 to anyone who finds a bag of Chips a'hoy cookies without any chocolate chips. Ann Smith, a spokeswoman for Nabisco, denied that such promotions encourage gambling. "They are purchasing the product," she said. "It's a consumer promotion geared toward added value."

THE NEXT BET—COPING IN A CULTURE OF GAMBLING

Many students in places like Atlantic City become familiar with casino games because they work after school or in summer at the casinos. Although customers must be 21, the minimum age for working at a casino is 18. Many young gamblers said that they had jobs and financed their habit using the same disposable income that other young people spend at the movies or the mall. However, gambling experts said that many of those who gamble at school or elsewhere come from affluent families and have more money than the average student. Casinos here and in other cities have created opportunities for young people. In addition to jobs, they provide a wide range of assistance to local teenagers, from scholarships to mentoring programs. But with some of those same young people becoming increasingly fascinated with gambling, some communities are now questioning whether they should accept any largess from the casinos in their neighborhoods.

In Louisiana, casino employees participate in career days at high schools, and casinos have donated to students everything from pumpkins for Halloween to playing cards emblazoned with casino logos. But now, after opponents of gambling complained that these donations were only veiled attempts by the casinos to cultivate future loyal cus-

tomers, gambling regulators are considering a ban on donations from casinos to students. "We are trying to make a determination as to whether the stuff they do in the schools is marketing," said Hillary Crain, chairman of the state's gaming control board.

Many experts said that the best method for dealing with the escalating interest in gambling among youths is to teach them more about the potential downside to gambling, and to get them to better understand probability, the ratio of the number of times that something will probably occur to the number of possible occurrences. If they better understood the extent to which the odds are against them, experts said, fewer children would be so anxious to gamble. Still, said Edward Looney, the executive director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, "Youngsters are youngsters, and gambling is an exciting thing for them to do because it's risky."

But even as schools preach against gambling, in many places it has become a part of the culture of adolescence. Growing up in Warwick, R.I., where residents can bet on the state lottery, jai alai and dog races, play video lottery machines or drive to the Foxwoods casino an hour away in Connecticut, Seth Jackson anxiously, awaited the day he would turn 21 and could step into a big, ram-bunctious casino to gamble to his heart's content.

"It was a big deal for me the first time," Mr. Jackson, 22 a senior at George Washington University, said during a recent "senior week" bus trip to Atlantic City, the gambling capital of the East Coast. "Everybody around me gambled when I was growing up," he said, as he stood surrounded by classmates and slot machines inside the Tropicana.

At Atlantic City High School here, students said that betting on sports and playing card games for money was common. Several students said in interviews that they knew of a fellow student who worked as a professional bookie, laying odds on games and collecting bets. "The guy books bets right in school," said Tom Le, 16 a sophomore.

In May, on the night of the school's senior prom, one of the activities arranged for the evening was a mock casino, set up inside the cafeteria. Students received clips and played casino games like blackjack and craps. "I was really astonished at how well they knew the games," said Mr. Steele, the principal. He said he believed that gambling had captured the fancy of young people because it made them feel like adults. "I guess it's a nice feeling to go into the casino, play and receive complimentary drinks," he said. "How can you tell them, here it is, it's exciting, but you can't do it? We have to face it, it's here to stay. It's a matter that's going to have to be dealt with. I don't know how. Just hope and pray that it's done on a small scale."