

on Religious Freedom, as certain provisions of the draft regarding the granting of legal personality need additional refinement. I similarly call on Serbian officials to amend their current law and ensure all groups seeking registration receive legal status. Meanwhile, there is a need to step up efforts to respect the sanctity and ensure the safety of places of worship that have in the past been the targets of ethnically based violence in Kosovo, Bosnia, Serbia and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, concerted efforts by courageous leaders in the Balkans and elsewhere have helped move the region from the edge of the abyss to the threshold for a brighter and more prosperous future. I congratulate the countries of southeastern Europe on the progress achieved thus far and encourage them to make further progress to ensure that all of the people of the region benefit.

TRIBUTE TO WESTERVELT  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Westervelt Christian Church on the occasion of its induction into the National Register of Historic Places in February 2006. Westervelt Christian Church celebrated this special occasion with a ceremony on October 8, 2006.

The church was formed in 1921 after the Antioch Church families, living in Westervelt, felt they were traveling too far for services and desired that a new Christian church be built in Westervelt. It is believed that charter members of the First Christian Church were accepted on October 31, 1921 and that a list of these members was placed in the cornerstone of the church.

The church, built in classical revival style, was built during the years of 1921, 1922 and 1923. The lots for the church were donated by E.D. and Alpharetta Kerr and Charles and Minnie Donnel. The architect was Charles Harris and he designed the interior of the church to have outstanding acoustics while the outside of the building was designed to resemble a Greek temple. The building was dedicated on May 6, 1923. To this day, the church still uses the original theater seats, an original serving table in the basement as well as the original hanging lights.

In 1968, the congregation of First Christian Church decided to remove themselves from the Disciples of Christians Churches. The church formed new articles of incorporation and changed the name to Westervelt Christian Church, a now independent Christian church. Today, the church has the following mission statement, "The mission of the Westervelt Christian Church is to exalt and worship Almighty God by living, teaching and preaching the gospel of His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ as revealed to us by His holy word, the Bible."

I am pleased to congratulate Westervelt Christian Church on this special occasion. My prayers are with the church during this special time. May God bless the congregation of Westervelt Christian Church.

GAMBLING EXPLOSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, gambling is exploding throughout our country. I am deeply concerned about the impact this is having on our society. Gambling destroys families and preys on the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some comments from a recent speech delivered by Rev. Tom Grey, national spokesman and field director for the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling and National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion. Rev. Grey gave these remarks to the Seventh Annual Commercial Real Estate Deal Maker Forum on October 24, 2006, in Cleveland, Ohio, as Ohio voters were considering the question on the Ohio ballot to legalize casino gambling. The proposal, which included money allocated for education, was dubbed the "Earn and Learn" initiative. Voters defeated the initiative 57-43 percent on election day, November 7.

Tom has worked to bring attention to the harm gambling can bring to families and communities. Excerpts of Tom Grey's speech follow:

Gambling is like a fungus. If it gets started in one region, it tends to spread. We saw this happening, and in 1994 we formed, from the bottom up, a national organization to fight it. We gathered local and state activists and formed the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. We started sharing information and we challenged the spread of gambling at the ballot box. We did that in the peak of hard times for states. State budgets were upside down all across the country, and the casinos were pitching gambling as 'the force of history, the wave of the future.' In the beginning there were bands playing while governors cut ribbons and welcomed the riverboats as economic salvation. The promoters declared that gambling was 'inevitable,' but a decade later we now know it isn't even desirable.

The wave of gambling hit a wall when we started exposing the product. Key votes in Ohio, Rhode Island, Missouri, and Florida surprised the gambling promoters. Voters turned it down. They burst the balloon of inevitability. The promoters lost. Ordinary citizens were successful. It's at the ballot box where we have our best results. They can buy legislators with their threats and big campaign contributions, but they can't buy elections.

Gambling is and always has been an 'other side of the tracks business.' Do you really believe that valued lakeside museums and gateway sports complexes are enhanced by having a casino next to them? In addition, there are terrible side effects with this product. Read the label. 'May Cause'—no—WILL cause addiction, bankruptcy, crime and corruption.'

Well, most of you are here this morning because you are business people whose businesses rise with the tide of a flourishing Cleveland, the community where you live and do business. Let me use an example from one of America's most admired businessmen from the past named Herb Taylor.

For Taylor, a deal wasn't a good deal unless it was a good deal for everyone. Every deal, and every major business decision, had to pass these four questions, or tests:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build good will and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

IS IT THE TRUTH?

The casino crowd has made billions turning teachers, school kids and PTA parents into gambling lobbyists. They do this by promising money for education, and that's exactly what they're doing in Ohio. Gambling promoters need to pick education or some other worthy community cause to buy their way into our communities or states. They want us to overlook the fact that the lion's share of the money goes to them. In Ohio, it's 55 percent. They want us to think the money's not going to the gambling promoters; they want you to think it's going to the schools.

Gambling isn't new money. It's re-directed money. It's trading dollars. Gambling came to New Mexico in 1994, and by 1998 the state's Secretary of Taxation and Revenue reported roughly \$1 to \$1.2 billion per year in other taxable sales had fallen off the balance sheet. Entertainment, retail, restaurants, and services took huge hits from the casinos, and as a result, paid far less in taxes. The best the economists could say was the economy was playing a 'zero sum game.' The casinos were winning and the other businesses were losing.

Is the gambling sales pitch the truth? NO! No state has gambled itself rich, including Nevada—a state that should serve as a model for what a state can produce with gambling. Nevada recently passed the largest tax increase in that state's history. Republican Governor Kenny Guinn told his legislature in his inaugural address, 'Our revenue system is broken because it has relied on regressive and unstable taxes.' (Guinn understands that when you take money from the citizens to run the government, it's still taxes, even if you do it with a slot machine.) Guinn told his legislature, 'Implicit in this (gambling) tax strategy was a belief that the revenues from gaming and tourism could keep pace with our growing and diverse population. Unfortunately, this strategy has failed.'

Nevada ranks near the bottom in per pupil spending on education, and spends less per capita on Medicaid than any other state. If those two areas don't concern you, take a look at where Nevada ranks in high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and children living in poverty. If the epicenter of gambling can't gamble itself rich—if the poster-child of casino-gunded government can't balance the budget, and if the model of slot machine largesse fails its kids so miserably, why would Ohio want to follow Nevada on its downward path?

IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?

The simple truth is that 30 to 50 percent of casino gambling money comes from problem and pathological gamblers. Can anyone think of anything more cynical than funding education on the backs of sick and troubled people?

There are about 400 of you here this morning. If casinos come to town, you can expect about 12 of you will become this kind of addicted gambler. You might not steal, but the addiction will likely cost you your home, your savings, your family, and your self respect. It could be you, your spouse, your siblings, your children. In the end, this addiction humiliates formerly great citizens to the point of desperation and even suicide. Gambling addicts think about suicide more than any other addictive group, and they act on those thoughts.

Inviting a casino to town is playing Russian roulette with your friends and neighbors; employees and business partners. At 3 percent, which is conservative in a casino town, it would be like giving you a handgun with 400 chambers, and 12 of them are loaded. Are you sure you want to pass that around