

money," the article says, but they are "virtual slot machines designed to turn money over quickly. One watches the children in the arcades with dismay. Many exhibit the same agitated and frustrated demeanor of gambling-addicted adults as they pump their coins into the machines."

Gambling proponents say they are concerned about unattended children in casinos. That new found concern may have been spurned by high-publicity cases like the one last year in a Primm, Nev., casino hotel. A 7-year-old girl from Los Angeles, a second-grader, had been playing in and around a casino arcade, left on her own, while her father gambled. She was raped and murdered.

Syndicated columnists Don Feder and William Safire have both written recent op-ed articles decrying the gambling industry's targeting of children. In a recent column, Feder reported that the Las Vegas Hilton spent \$70 million on a ride called "Star Trek: The Experience." Young people waited for hours in line to get on the ride, and the line stretched through a gambling area. Hundreds of kids took the opportunity to play the slot machines, Feder reported. Something tells me the casino was not at all unhappy about this experience. If they are to exist in the future, they have to seduce the next generation of customers.

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is saying the same thing these days. "The idea is that parents will feel less guilty if they are subjected to family entertainment, and that the next generation of gambling addicts must be given attention," Nader said at a recent speech in Washington, D.C. "The gambling industry is as brazen as the tobacco and alcohol industry," Nader said. "It is even more brazen."

More and more teens are finding themselves trapped in a web of gambling from which they can't break free. The New York Times printed a shocking front-page story about this a few months ago. The article cited a study by Harvard Medical School's Dr. Howard Shaffer, who published a recent study which found that young people are becoming addicted to gambling at a rate almost three times higher than that of adults. The article also cited a Louisiana State University study which found that one in seven 18- to 21-year-olds in Louisiana were problem gamblers. These are young people with a "chronic and progressive psychological disorder characterized by an emotional dependence on gambling and a loss of control over their gambling."

The 1996 New Mexico Survey of Gambling Behavior conducted a similar study and found that more than 85 percent of New Mexico's 18- to through 20-year-olds gamble. More than 66 percent said they had gambled in the previous month. Out of the 85 percent of young people who gamble, 37 percent said they were having gambling problems and 12 percent said they had a serious problem with gambling. The study also found a strong link between gambling behavior before the age of 21 and the development of serious gambling-related problems.

In New Jersey, gambling among teens is on the rise, according to the Council of Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey's Edward Looney. Looney says there is gambling in every high school in New Jersey, including gambling which is backed by organized crime. One survey of high school juniors and seniors reported that 30 percent gamble once a week at

casinos, race tracks, on sports—including their own school's sports—on the lottery. According to the state's statistics, 91,754 juveniles were arrested or evicted from New Jersey casinos in 1997 alone. Out of this number, 329 were found gambling on slot machines and 114 at tables. There were 38,502 teens escorted from casinos last year, and 52,364 were turned away at the door when they tried to enter illegally.

But there's more. Not only is gambling hurting moms and dads and young people. But it's also hurting grandma and grandpa. According to a recent article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, the spread of legalized gambling across America has led to financial ruin for many senior citizens. In Iowa, the article said, three years after riverboat gambling was introduced, bingo and casino gambling became the number-one pastime of choice for people over 65 years of age in the Omaha area.

Is that what each of us envisions for ourselves when we think about retiring? Spending our Golden Years addicted to gambling? I don't think so. But that's what's happening, all over America. The gambling industry says it's concerned about problem gambling among the elderly. But when you read their trade publications, ad after ad features grey-haired men and women beckoning seniors to "join in the fun."

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, many American people are starting to wise up to what's really going on here. As they are watching friends, neighbors and their own family members sinking in gambling's quicksand, they are speaking up and standing up against this blight on our nation. In state after state, voters are making their voices heard, loud and clear. They don't want it in their communities. Take casino gambling, for instance. Out of the last 21 efforts to bring in casinos nationwide, all have failed but one, and that one, in Detroit, Michigan, won only by a very slim margin. Even now, the citizens there are seeking to overturn that decision.

What is needed in our country is for our community leaders and elected officials to hear the voice of the American people on this issue, for they have indeed spoken. They have seen that gambling is bad for their families, bad for their communities, bad for their kids. It is destructive. It is dangerous.

I could go on and on for hours citing cases and studies. We have reports piled high in my office. But I think what I've shared with you today is enough of a taste—a bitter taste—of what gambling really means for a lot of people.

This is a problem that is national in scope. That's why we had to pass legislation which the President signed into law to establish the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. The commission is over half way through its two-year comprehensive evaluation of gambling's impact in America, including open meetings all across the country, and is expected to report its findings by next summer.

We need to wake up. It is wrong to allow government to become the predator of the people. Think about this the next time gambling's high-priced lobbyists show up at your door with a campaign contribution or an offer to put on a "high-dollar" fundraiser.

JOSE AND KATHY VILLEGAS RECEIVE THE APPLE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION AWARD

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention an honor given to Jose and Kathy Villegas, residents of the great state of New Mexico. Jose and Kathy Villegas have received the 1998 Apple Parent Involvement in Education (PIE) Award.

Jose and Kathy Villegas received this award because their children Candace Marie, age 13 and Joseph, Jr. age 11 took the initiative to write a letter of nomination to Apple PIE Awards. Our most important job as parents is providing our children with values, teaching the difference between right and wrong and setting examples of respect for ourselves, others and our community. Jose and Kathy Villegas obviously have done this with their children. The nomination letter included a description of how their parents were instrumental in getting a classroom addition at their elementary school and a stop light at a busy intersection used by school children. Jose and Kathy Villegas are involved in many task forces working on issues important to children's education. The Villagas' story provides an excellent example of how parent involvement can make a positive difference in their children's lives, the local school and their community.

Jose and Kathy Villegas' story is part of a feature story in the November 1998 issue of Working Mother titled, "Classroom Champions". As the only individuals to receive this award in the United States, they stand as an example to all of us. Join me today in recognizing recipients of the 1998 Apple Parent Involvement in Education Award, Jose and Kathy Villegas.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4194, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 1998

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1999 makes available significant funding for economic development grant assistance as part of the Community Development Block Grant program.

The Conference Report to accompany this legislation, House Report 105-769, on page 248, provides \$750,000 to the City of Sardis, Mississippi, for the City's planned Water Resources Infrastructure Program, a portion of which includes construction of wastewater treatment facilities, as noted in the Conference Report.

I would like to take this opportunity to describe in specific detail how the City will use