

Speech before the House Judiciary II Committee on Video Poker

By Rev. Mark Creech, Executive Director

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Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Rev. Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League.

Certainly everyone here would agree the economic times have changed and that's the primary reason for the consideration of this legislation. Nevertheless, we must never forget that though the times have changed, the nature of video poker has not.

Video poker brought both heartache and shame to our great State.

- Many of our citizens became addicted to it, leading to both social and economic consequences for them, their families and their communities.
- Law enforcement regularly reported the illegal use of video poker machines, causing Sheriff's to have to spend scarce dollars to mount expensive undercover stings.
- And, it was, most unfortunately, at the heart of government corruption and scandal.

I am reminded of the words of Him, who said, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul. May I suggest that, in a sense, a State can lose its soul as well. We can become so obsessed with the need for revenue that we make compromises that will be entirely too costly.

Let's not forget the insidious nature of video poker. North Carolina's hope for sustaining its needs is not in some promise of treasure, but instead in what our national motto on every coin admonishes, "In God We Trust." And we also have faith in the richness our people's character.

For these reasons, the Christian Action League urges that there be no serious consideration, now or in the future, to adopt this legislation.