

For Immediate Release

Contact: Linda Rogers (905) 555-1475

News release

Legislative Committee on the Administration of Justice Told, “Don’t legalize VLT’s.”

“Legalization of video lottery terminals (VLT’s) is unexpected and unwelcome in Niagara,” Golden Horseshoe Social Action Committee speaker Linda Rogers will tell the Legislative Committee on the Administration of Justice at its public hearings in Fort Erie City Hall on August 13.

“The government’s plans to legalize these slot machines are a nasty surprise to citizens in the Niagara Region. There was no mention of legalizing one-arm bandits during the PC’s election campaign. In fact, the Premier said, ‘We are not convinced that this is the way that we want to raise money.’”

“VLT’s have caused problems everywhere that they have been legalized. When Brandon University professor Barbara Gfellner surveyed 507 VLT users, she found 9.3% were classified as problem or potential problem gamblers.”

The Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) found that VLT’s attract depressed people. “People already depressed by unemployment or poverty may make their problems worse by losing money at these slot machines,” says Rogers. “The ARF also found that VLT’s are particularly attractive to women and adolescents with no prior gambling knowledge. We may create whole new classes of problem gamblers.”

“VLT’s may even hurt the restaurant business. Quebec City bar owner Benoit Mercure says customers spend money on the slots, not on food and beer. Ian Pickles, a Sylvan Lake, Alberta, bar owner who got rid of VLT’s said he got to hate watching people throwing their money away. And Albertan Ted Tsendkos promoted his bar with a sign reading ‘Hurray! No VLT’s Here.’”

In Alberta, Lottery Review Committee Chair Judy Gordon said, “87% felt VLT’s are too accessible.”

“Let’s prevent a lot of heart ache: Don’t legalize VLT’s,” said Rogers.

The Golden Horseshoe Social Action Committee is an umbrella group of representatives of over 40 community, church, and labour groups in Niagara. The group was formed in the fall of 1995. Since that time it has held monthly public meetings for political education and debate on subjects of national and provincial interest.