that would establish a National Gambling Commission to examine the impact of this $40-billion-a-year business. To put our discussion in a few words, that impact is nothing short of frightening. The only winners in the gambling world are the people who own the casinos. Gambling is legalized larceny by trick. The seepage of this dirty money into every crack of American politics is further undermining the integrity of our political system.

From Frank's office, Jim and I traveled to the Senate Office Buildings on the north side of the Capitol complex. By prior arrangement, we were accompanied by reporters from *Time* magazine and *The New York Times*. Our schedule was packed with meeting after meeting, but one thing I've learned in Washington is that chance meetings are important, too. As we entered the Capitol Building, Senator John McCain, Republican from Arizona, noticed our group and pulled us aside. We had a quick exchange about the imminent welfare reform debate and several other issues.

By now it was almost 10:00 a.m. Our first planned stop was the office of Majority Leader Robert Dole. The media representatives—again by prior arrangement—stayed with us for introductions, then left the room—as they would all day—while we discussed the issues. As everyone knows, of course, Senator Dole is a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. He understands that by law neither Focus on the Family or Family Research Council can or will endorse a candidate for public office. But he is also the legislative leader of the U.S. Senate. We came not to endorse him, but to ask him—as we ask every office holder—to endorse and embrace our concerns about the condition of the family.

Jim and I shared with Senator Dole our reaction to the disturbing news out of Beijing. We brought to his attention the urgency of the debates in that distant capital about the United Nations' increasingly shrill campaigns for abortion on demand and redefinition of the family. We pointed out the sad truth that the delegation President Clinton named—backed by like-minded Europeans—has heavily promoted this radical agenda. We urged the senator to do whatever he can to ensure that the United Nations reverses its course. We urged him to speak out forcefully for the pro-life cause as well.

At 11:00 a.m. we met with Senator Dan Coats of Indiana. Coats is a longtime personal friend, a man who is unafraid to talk about the importance of faith in public life. Our time with him was, as always, an uplifting experience.

On the way to our next meeting, we had a couple more of those chance encounters I mentioned. One was with Arlen Specter, the Republican senator from Pennsylvania with whom I've sparred publicly about abortion. Senator Specter is also a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. Specter joked that I am the only person he can find who will debate him about his "pro-choice" position and suggested we "take our show on the road." I was polite in my response as the senator is an amiable man, but the truth is that our differences transcend the usual political categories—they're not about marginal tax rates or offshore drilling, but the defense of innocent human life.

Our steps took us next to the Senate Dining Room for a lunch meeting with the junior senator from Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum. Santorum was a member of the House when he was elected last year, in the bumper crop of men and women who came to Congress with some dramatic ideas for reform. Once again, we discussed welfare reform. FRC has been in the forefront of the effort to draw the attention of lawmakers to the way current welfare policies promote illegitimacy and fatherlessness. Senator Santorum has been very open to our arguments and has worked hard to make the welfare system more family-friendly.

After lunch, it was a sprint from the Senate back to the south side of the Capitol for a meeting with House Speaker Newt Gingrich at 12:45 pm. Cameras from ABC News joined us at this point, once again stepping outside when the meetings began. As American diplomats like to describe these things, we had a "full and frank" discussion with the Speaker. When I wrote to you last March about another day Jim Dobson and I spent on the Hill, I described a meeting with Newt Gingrich as "encouraging," but noted that we would use "plain words with those who wield power" when the situation called for it. Let me put it this way: We were plain with the Speaker on September 12. He was plain with us, too.

We told him that we were deeply concerned about the delays in Congressional action on the pro-family agenda. From pro-family tax cuts to funding for public broadcasting and the abortion issue, the 104th Congress has talked right but acted little. We left the Speaker's office with what we took to be commitments from him to hold oversight hearings on the fiasco in Beijing and to create a working group of members to advance the right to life. Only time will tell if these commitments are kept.

From the Capitol, we raced back to the Senate for a 2:00 p.m. meeting with Senator John Ashcroft of Missouri, Senator Ashcroft has a keen interest in the family. During the Bush Administration he was co-chairman of a Task Force on the Urban Family that compiled a penetrating report on how the breakdown of the family is destroying lives already racked by poverty. We shared ideas on how to rebuild common standards of right and wrong.

By this point, Jim and I were feeling like a couple of marathon runners, but it was time to return to the House for a meeting with a group of freshman legislators, chaired by U.S. Representative Linda Smith of Washington state. These young leaders were clearly frustrated and told us so. They see the ways of Washington as slow to change, and they know that their constituents are impatient for change. They believe that this Congress must pick up the pace of reform and explain it aggressively to the American people.

When this meeting was over, there came—quite by accident—the highlight of the day. As we were making our way down the Capitol steps with the media's cameras whirring, a small group of tourists surrounded us. Jim Dobson is used to being recognized like this, and I'm getting more used to being recognized when I'm with him! The more we stood together shaking hands and talking, the more the group grew, with one mother and father after another coming up and telling us to "keep at it" for the family.