

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, my amendment allows the cattle people to receive a refund if they so apply. Two years ago we passed a beef check-off bill and we had approximately 12 to 13 farm organizations support that. And now the support has drained away for the beef check-off bill, the mandatory part. I'm making this that they can apply for a refund. Now let's look and see which states have a refund, Kansas, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Illinois. They have refunds. Also I would like to call to the attention of this body that they had a beef check-off refund bill in this state and all of the people who raised beef went to the ASCS office, they were qualified that they raise beef. They voted and it failed twice. Now we'll take one more step and let's look and see how much money is raised by those states that have a check-off. In Iowa they raised \$1,686,000; Colorado they raised \$1 million. In Nebraska, with a mandatory, we only raised \$673,000 more. Also in Nebraska we have unequal collection. We have unequal assessments and here is the reason. We have brand areas which means the western half of the state, every time you sell some cattle a man from the State Brand Department comes out and checks the brand. Upon his checking the brand, he issues how much is due at 25 cents a head for the cattle that are sold. Now the eastern part of the state is a nonbrand area. They sell their cattle and there is no one there to enforce the law or to collect the money. So it doesn't balance out. It isn't fair. Not only that, but they don't only collect the 25 cents per head once, they collect it four times. Now the beef board, in all of its wisdom, decided that beings they were getting so much heat that a cow and a calf, when it was sold, would only count as one head, one head. Now the law says 25 cents per head, but the board voted to count a cow and a calf as one head. The Attorney General came back and said they can't do this because anybody can add a cow is one and a calf is two, that's two head. But they tried to change it to only count one head. So you can see, by that, that the pressure is there to make it with a refund. Now this summer we had a series of hearings and had a bill and a survey showed 1,795 people to around 300 people wanted the entire bill killed. So this is a compromise. We are still going to have the beef check-off, but it is going to be, they can have a refund. It is not going to hurt the program that much. But we have a lot of citizens out there that aren't paying it. Do you know that the Attorney General's office is sending out letters, trying to collect \$1.50,