

there is another middle ground and that is to go ahead and pass 783A realizing that the money will not be utilized if the negotiations are not successful. And, in effect, stating to the parties to these negotiations, or at least the parties that were involved in these negotiations, that the State of Nebraska is willing to make a significant commitment to this process. So in conclusion, what I would say is that I think the body has already, at least 40 members of this body have already, by executing the letter of May 29th have made a fairly succinct statement of public policy, and that is that the maintenance of these rail lines and the general revitalization of our rural...the rural parts of our state in the area of transportation is important to us, as a Legislature. So I think that point has already been...need not be argued. How we implement that is, obviously, something that needs to be debated. LB 783A is one way to go about it. The reason that I am asking that it be reconsidered is because I have...my office is next to Senator Wickersham's and I have...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...talked to him about this a lot, and I am not, it has been suggested that this vote is some kind of a deal on LB 355, Senator Chambers has mentioned that, and, in fact, I am convinced that this is something that we ought to consider and that we ought to...at least I want an opportunity to reconsider, and give this part of the state an opportunity to make this work for them. So I would ask that this matter be reconsidered at this time.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Ashford. Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Madam President and members, the railroads have been the backbone of this country for years and years. They have been eradicated at a fast rate for various reasons. And Senator Beutler has put provisions into this bill that will protect it. It is an investment for Nebraska, it is an investment for our future, for our children. I can't see why this body wouldn't want to invest in something that is good for Nebraska, and there is no real challenge here, there is no real...there is not a gamble, like Senator Robinson pointed out some good...he made a good point or two, but we are not in this strictly to make 10, 20, 30 percent on our investment. Senator Beutler has provisions in there that says we will be protected. It is an investment for our future. It is an investment for