

SENATOR HORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I just briefly would like to rise in support of LB 92 (sic) for a couple of reasons. One, as...or it's LB 22, thank you, Senator Schimek. As Senator Will and Senator Wesely pointed out, there is an issue of health care and the rising health care costs in the State of Nebraska and across the country, and what impact and what responsibility do people who engage in such activities as smoking, which we know to be a health hazard. What responsibility do they have to the...to contribute to the health and welfare and to pay for some of the revenue cost of that activity. And I think, while LB 22 is a General Fund bill, Senator Will is right, and LB 595, which follows, is a bill that directly impacts on cancer research and is an important bill also. But I think we need to recognize as a body that over the past couple of years we've done some things in sales and income taxes, and raised those taxes, and created a general obligation to try and balance the budget and to raise enough revenue so that this state can do the business that it wants to do, and has a legal responsibility to do, and to provide the services that, as a government, the citizens of Nebraska have asked us to provide. And you've got to get the money somewhere, and that's the question, where do you get the money? And we've...I think a majority of the people in this body are committed to no general tax increase. So if you will not do an across the board general tax increase, and we've asked the citizens of the State of Nebraska, with sales and income taxes in the last couple of years, to raise those taxes, it seems to me it's fair that we do find some additional sources of revenue in such things as cigarette taxes and increasing some of the fees and some of the user fees in the state in order to meet the obligations of the State of Nebraska. And simply what we're doing here in LB 22 and Senator Warner's bill is putting some additional money into the General Fund so that some of the things that we want to be able to afford to do, and we want to continue to be able to be able to do, we are able to do in the P2 budget. And without this bill we won't be able to do that. And I think those...each one of us probably needs to look at that appropriation trailer bill and look at what's in there and to see if...if you're willing to give those things up, if you don't vote to advance LB 22. The only other alternative out there is a general sales tax increase. And if we do a general sales tax increase, I think we'll hear from more of our constituents than we are on a general cigarette tax increase. And we are likely not, as a body, to make that type of decision or be willing to make that type of decision. And I, frankly, have a folder with some