

states in the nation that have higher property taxes as they affect farmers in the State of Nebraska. I just wonder how important people think agriculture is in the State of Nebraska. I have always supported a checkoff for promotion related items on corn and I have always supported that there should not be a rebate, that the farmer should not be able to write in and get it back, and I would support that here. But I just wanted to point out to you that the other...that five of the other seven top producing states do allow farmers to write in and get their money back, and I would point out to you that we're trying to get the figures but other states do use General Fund money to support their ethanol production. I think it's all right to debate this. I don't want to hold the bill up. I appreciate the Revenue Committee's consideration in using General Fund money to support on ethanol plants. I would point out to you that if you go west of Hastings, you will see no ethanol production in the State of Nebraska. The corn market for the corn in the district I live in basically goes to cattle feeders in southwest Kansas and Texas. It gets railed to the west coast. It gets used for poultry production in California. Very little corn goes from the district I represent to ethanol plants, and yet the plant at Blair, Nebraska will probably ship in corn by rail from Minnesota and Iowa where corn is cheaper and nobody is going to pay a checkoff tax on that, if they do, they will pay it in Iowa or Minnesota. So I don't know what the solution is but I think three-quarters of a cent is too big a burden to ask the Nebraska farmer to bear, considering what we've done to the farmers in the past.

SPEAKER WITHEM: On the Schrock amendment, Senator McKenzie.

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Yes, thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body, Senator Schrock puts me in a difficult position this morning as to whether or not I would stand up and support this amendment or oppose it. The original bill I introduced was a half cent, not three-quarters cent, and yet I also have suggestions from members of the ag community suggesting we introduce legislation starting at one cent. And, if you will recall, Senator Warner had suggested one and a half cents or as much as three and a half cents if it was sold to a plant. So I think Senator Schrock's amendment allows us to have discussion on the floor similar to the discussion we had in committee and the discussion that those interested parties have had over the course of the year. How much is a fair share? And how do we go about asking our producers to contribute that fair share? On