

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: I haven't heard too much about spending cuts. I'm going to stand up in support of Senator Beutler's amendment because it does talk about one of the options being reduced state spending, reduced state spending. I know there's a lot of bills in here to reduce everybody else's spending, I have a bill in to reduce the increase in our 1996-97 budget by 5 percent, which would reduce spending. And I, I think we can talk about property taxes, we all know what, what the parameters of the discussion are. But I think Senator Beutler's amendment brings home exactly what the solutions are. We have two options, we either reduce spending or we increase taxes. I know there's a lot of things that we can do that have been introduced in here that we can discuss and try to do to, to cut costs and these kind of things. But one that we can do immediately, that would have an impact immediately, that we wouldn't have to wait to the year 2007, although I voted for Senator Beutler's other amendment that would have put some parameters on it, I would like to see it on a shorter time frame, but I figured any time frame at all was getting somewhere. But just the fact that, that we can talk about reducing spending. We didn't talk about it much last year. Nobody wanted to talk about it. We had an increase in our budget, in our two-year budget, and nobody wanted to talk about any of the amendments that were introduced on the floor, and now suddenly we all come back this year really concerned about the property tax problem. It's not a tax problem, and that's what I keep telling people. There are some adjustments that could be made, certainly. But the problem that we have in the state of Nebraska is not a whole lot of people and a whole lot of spending. So it's just like a family budget, is we've gone beyond that family budget, we've gone beyond what that family can afford to pay, and we've got to cut back. It's really, I think, as basic as that, as basic as it says in Senator Beutler's amendment that we're supposed to be discussing here this morning, not giving all of our opinions on, on what everything can be done, we'll have time for all that. I kind of don't appreciate the fact that we had to take time this morning to do this. But right here, this amendment tells you what our real options are, what the solutions are. Either you reduce state spending or you increase taxation. This came up in our discussion with the Education Committee and the state school board when the petition drive was there from the NSEA and the