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February 24, 2000 LB 659, 1241

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I propose to amend LB 659 with a bill that was just voted out of committee with no negative votes yesterday, originally LB 1241. What that seeks to do is increase the funds available to compulsive gamblers council and those efforts in our state to address those needs. The first year that the compulsive gamblers hotline existed, they had around 400 phone calls. This last year they had around 6,500. The need clearly exists. And, in 1997, the Legislature adopted some language that, should the need be demonstrated, that a million dollars would come out of the Charitable Gaming Division and, to be quite blunt, that million dollars is not there. This seeks to distribute the burden, so to speak, of providing those funds, and you have a handout at your desk that outlines these, that the remaining proceeds from charitable gaming, instead of a mandated one million, the remaining proceeds and then a flat \$500,000 before the transfers of the Education Innovation Fund and Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund, and then the current one percent remaining on the books that goes to Compulsive Gamblers from the lottery. I would be happy to take any questions, and I would encourage the adoption of this amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Dwite Pedersen, on the Smith amendment to LB 659.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature. This amendment is one that I can support for this...on LB 659. As most of you've been told, and I won't carry this out real long, but gambling is a very insidious disease. We spend very, very little money that comes from our lottery funds to prevent gambling and to intervene in gambling for the intervention of the disease. This is a mild amount of money, minimal, should say, amount of money that we can give these people who are truly doing a good job in this field. What is the old saying about an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure? This is what this is about and I hope that you're going to support Senator Smith's amendment of LB 1241, which is now AM2542 to this bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Pedersen. Senator Beutler, on the Smith amendment.