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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 75

participated in the upswing of the last six or seven years. They haven't had the returns that the rest of the state has had. They are not into the stock market and they didn't see their values bloom and blossom like those of us who had money in 401(k)s or stock options or deferred compensation programs. In fact, I believe the story that rural Nebraska is having a tough time. I believe that. And I'll tell you it's a hard thing to figure out what to do about it because so many of the levers that influence rural Nebraska are not before us. I got to tell you I don't think I want to lower the percentage that the break that we are giving now on property tax valuation because I think it will distort the school aid formula. I consider Senator Coordsen's bill on moving to an income stream of valuing agricultural land but there is some constitutional difficulties, and if it does work like an income stream would, it will get us to the same values we have now and it won't be much of a benefit. I'm left with trying to find what to do about rural Nebraska, and I gave a vote today. I voted this morning in the rural, I am sorry, in the Revenue Committee for an ethanol bill. It's \$21 million over seven years. It's to help on the supply side, not the demand side. I got to tell you I do that with not a great deal of hope that it's going to have a huge impact. I wish it would have more. Frankly, I'm doubtful that it'll have a big impact but it does open a market, and I think markets are a significant problem in agricultural Nebraska. In fact, I think there is one and only one thing that works and that's commodity prices and we can't do a darn thing about commodity prices. So now I've got LB 75. I want to do something for rural Nebraska. Do I want to do this? And I come out with the answer, no, I don't. I voted against Senator Thompson's bill on smoking and nonsmoking in restaurants, and my rationale was, look, there are thousands of restaurants, there are hundreds of them that choose to be nonsmoking. There's a very big marketplace out there and there are very strong consumers that are capable of defending themselves and effectuating change in the marketplace. If there are multiple players, both as sellers and buyers, the marketplace is its own regulating mechanism, which is why I didn't vote for that because I thought the marketplace could work. Nonsmokers can get their smoke-free atmospheres if they let the restaurateurs know that their dollars will flow appropriately. Here we're interjecting