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LB 657

salvage a little bit more of that money and still be willing to visit with the proponents of LB 657 and come to some kind of compromise on where we keep part of the money in the 309 fund and they get some of the money to do the job that they're...that I'm sure they consider to be important. And as I indicated this morning, I think those projects are important. That's not an issue for debate or argument. What they're doing is in the best interest of the city of Omaha and the city of Lincoln, and I do not hold them at fault for doing what they're doing. The only thing that I disagree with is where they're getting the money from. And I suggested earlier they might look at an increase in cigarette tax or some other method of trying to fund what they want to do, not because I don't think those projects ought to be done, but simply because we have projects that are highly important and they need to be done also. And some of them, as I indicated, are critical. Did you say time? Is my time up?

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: No, Senator, you have roughly four minutes left.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Oh, I'm opening on a...I forgot I am on a...well, I don't think I want to use all those four minutes. I think I'm going to defer to Senator Wickersham to let him continue the discussion because I think I told you everything I know and a little bit besides. With that, I'll turn the rest of my time over to Senator Wickersham.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Wickersham, you've got roughly three minutes, if you care to use it.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. I would obviously support Senator Vrtiska's amendment. Now Senator Vrtiska's amendment, as I understand it, does essentially what the amendment that I had offered prior to lunch did. The effect of that would have been to reduce by about half the allocation of funds to Lincoln and Omaha under LB 657. Senator Vrtiska wants to do the same thing, but in a more direct way. I was willing to take the redirected funds and redistribute those to municipalities. Senator Vrtiska rightfully has, I think, a greater concern for the 309 fund and simply wants to leave the money in the 309 fund rather than redistributing it to