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FLOOR DEBATE

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budget forecast, I was absolutely stunned that the Governor was going to request this money again for the State Fair in the budget situation we're in. And that probably just reflects differing points of view on what tax money should go for, but also reflects a different set of priorities. Those of us who serve on the Appropriations Committee come from all three caucuses. We are a very different committee in that we meet every day and that there is the geographic balance that comes from three people from each of the three caucuses in the Legislature. And so we have to weigh all these new money requests and decide what to do. This one was a debated request. It got five of the nine votes to keep it in the budget. And then when the budget advanced, it was in the budget. I think it's legitimate for Senator Chambers to bring this up. There are a number of areas that all of you might want to look at, in terms of what we present as a budget. I don't think the Appropriations Committee feels that you have to be with us 100 percent. We're just giving you our nine members from our views, from our caucuses, what we think should be in the budget this year. But I do dissent on this particular money because I think when we're in dire fiscal straits, as a number of you stood up and said, when we're looking at this \$1.10 issue in terms of property tax, we need to take a look at what we actually are putting in this budget. And we're putting a chunk of money for prizes at the State Fair. And I know I've said this before to you, but before I got on the Appropriations Committee, first of all, I had no idea that people got prize money when they went to the fair. I thought they got a ribbon. I didn't know \$25 or \$30 came along with it. But I also think at this point in time we have to be judicious in what we're spending people's tax money on. And there are basic, fundamental responsibilities of government. And there are those who say, well, run it like a business. Well, businesses get to decide what their product is and how they're going to...what they're going to market and some other things. Government doesn't get that choice. If someone runs out of money and is in a nursing home in Nebraska, we are paying 35 percent of the nursing home costs, and the federal government is paying 65 percent. As a committee, that funding has to come first because that is our obligation. That's why we come together as a government because we know that people who are in poverty or