

careful debate. Senator Dworak is correct, this is not the time to suspend the rules. Instead, this is the time to continue the dialogue on this measure so that we fully understand its impact. For example, just this week the Douglas County Board of Commissioners by resolution decided to oppose LB 499, yet the bill has been around quite a while, they could have taken that position earlier on. Only now did it sink in as to what the full impact of this bill would be and only now did it take that position. I think time is important on this kind of a debate. Governor Ray in Iowa appointed a Blue Ribbon Commission to look at the way the State of Iowa was operating and its commission has now come back with a very large report. One of the things that the report says is that Iowa should do away with this kind of a checkoff program because this kind of a checkoff program in the last analysis is not accountable to the elected officials of Iowa, and Governor Ray is picking up on that recommendation. Now I heard Senator DeCamp talking earlier about the corn checkoff and the wheat checkoff and the soybean checkoff and the like and saying, well in the end this is not significantly different from those kinds of checkoff programs. I suspect that there is a considerable difference between the lodging tax and the checkoff programs. On the other hand, the similarities are quite close. The truth of the matter is it is basically bad government. We all know...we all know the effect of earmarked funds or ultimate accountability of the agencies that use those earmarked funds. The Appropriations Committee says that it has a much easier time dealing with the code agencies in this state and dealing in particular with their general funds because those are our general fund tax dollars that are being used to carry out our mandates, and looking at those activities are easier than in the end looking at either a code or a noncode agency that is essentially using earmarked funds. We say, well it is a cash agency, it has enough cash to support its activities, it can continue to operate unabated and unchallenged. That is bad government. Good government takes this lodging tax money, if we are going to have it, puts it in our general fund coffers and we then use it as we see fit as the circumstances then demand. If we want to promote tourism, we will put more of our general fund money into economic development. If we don't want to promote tourism we will put our general fund money into homestead relief. We will take care of our taxpayers that are groaning, and we won't just promote one thing. Now I think debate should continue on this matter and I wholeheartedly urge the body to reject the motion to suspend the rules.