

can come back again soon.

SENATOR WESELY: We have had a number of amendments concerning 499 that ranged in all kinds of ways. We have considered the bill quite a bit, that's true, but I don't think that this amendment has been proposed to this point, so the change is a simple one in terms of the fact that we are just eliminating the county level that is optional under LB 499. We take away that option, and leave this bill as being an additional one percent state levy to promote tourism for the State of Nebraska. Now that seems to me to be a worthy goal and something I can support with this legislation and I certainly, as I mentioned before, would support that, but the arguments raised by Senators Dworak and Vickers I think make a lot of sense. You have got an editorial from the Lincoln Journal that expresses my sentiments. I think you might want to take a look at that if you have a minute, and basically I think we need to watch very carefully about the step we are taking on this bill because allowing the county to have the option of setting a levy, a sales tax levy, in terms of tourism promotion is a step I don't think we have taken before in this state. We have had the city sales tax. Now we are talking about a county sales tax, and I don't like it. I don't think we ought to take that step, and although I really believe in tourism and the promotion of tourism for the State of Nebraska and there is going to be a lot of infighting in this state perhaps as a result of the funds going to state level and the communities trying to fight for those funds...I think that is something we ought to try first before we take this next step and allow the counties their option of a levy locally. That is my concern. If you would adopt this amendment, if you would see the sort of arguments I see about this problem, I could support this bill, and I would hope that there were a number of other people that have some concerns about this bill that with this amendment they could also support the bill and see it passed. Now my position is that I support generally the concept. I know a number of senators have spoken against this bill. They don't care what it says, they are going to be against it. They don't care what provisions are in or out, they are going to vote against it. I am not in that position. I am not trying to kill this bill. I am not trying to gut this bill. I am trying to improve this bill and turn it into something that could have a very positive impact on the state's tourism industry and not cause the problems I see with the tax base for the state by allowing the counties this option on a sales tax levy for tourism promotion. Now that is an argument that is a philosophical one but it is also a practical one, and my intentions are