

April 9, 1980

LB 722

I think it is inappropriate for us to delegate this power. It is a responsibility that we should take. We should be responsible and accountable to the voters when tax increases occur in the State of Nebraska and I believe that the citizens of the State of Nebraska will lose that accountability if we proceed with this system. Last year we raised the gas tax and I went home and I heard some criticism of it and that is all right. It is appropriate, and if we raise the gas tax too high, they should start to get rid of some legislators if they think that is inappropriate. That is the way the system should work. We should be accountable. Now I am going to vote for LB 361 because I believe that we do need to supply additional revenues to support the construction and maintenance of roads in this state but I also believe that is a decision I should be accountable for as an elected representative of the people of the State of Nebraska, not as the Secretary of State who the people don't perceive would have that function, not as the Treasurer or the Tax Commissioner and others. I think this is a very basic, philosophical issue. I agree with Senator Warner that we do need additional funds but this, I believe, is not the way to do it. I hope that others address this point and I hope that we join Senator Maresh in indefinitely postponing LB 722.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Kahle.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I, too, support Senator Maresh in his endeavor. I very much support the increase in funding for our state highways. I would support more than the two cents that is in 361 but whatever the body wants to do will be fine. But I, too, feel that this is a different way of getting at funding our highway system and I suppose if we wanted to change the whole process and put the whole works on a sales tax basis or on an excise tax on the bulk products, it would be all right but to have two different kinds of taxes on the same motor fuel. I guess we always like to talk about gasoline and I think there is probably as much diesel fuel being burnt in the State of Nebraska, maybe a whole lot more, with the trucking industry and a lot of diesel cars on the road, so it is motor fuel and not gasoline but I think we shouldn't confuse the public. I think we should...they know now when they see the price on a pump how much of it is tax. If we turn it over to the Equalization Board, they are not going to know. Most of them don't know now what the Board of Equalization does or why they do it. They just complain that the tax goes up. So I strongly support doing away with 722 and going back to 361 and passing something that our constit-