

a side pocket from which to negotiate other kinds of political revenue arrangements with certain members of the Legislature. And I guess, although we all know that, although we continue sometimes to allow that charade to continue, this is so obvious that it really strips the mask away from the food sales tax credit idea and shows it for what it is, a manipulation, a hypocritical way of saying that we don't tax food when, of course, in fact, we do, and it shows that the credit system is not what it was designed to be and what it was promoted to be and what it was sold to this legislative body to be, simply a convenient way of returning those sales tax dollars at the end of the year in an administratively simple way, but, in fact, as a revenue raiser it's a way of taxing people and yet at the same time maintaining the promise that we are not taxing them. It is really, really ironic this morning to see that pious hypocrisy brought out so clearly because, in fact, we are reducing the credit not because it is not justifiable, not because people will only spend that money in taxes on food, but because if we reduce the sales tax credit in this way, we will have more money in the budget and we will balance our budget. It is the perfect evidence that what the sales tax credit is is the fudge factor for the Governor and the Legislature, I have to add, and that it is not the attempt to return to people the money that they pay in taxes on food that we promise and herald and bannered when we passed the sales income tax legislation. I am going to vote against the Maresh amendment, and if that means we have to raise taxes, so be it. We passed a healthy agenda of social change earlier this session. It included ADC payments, and included full commitment to the Natural Resources Development Fund. It committed funds to Mental Retardation. It committed funds to people and people programs, and I am not ready to retreat from that agenda, and I am not ready to retreat in the form of the Maresh amendment to LB 12. I am going to vote against this amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Higgins and then Senator Lamb.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Mr. President and members of the body, everybody has spoken so far to the morality of this, to the politics of it, I don't speak to anybody but you rural agricultural Senators. One of the ladies that lives in a high-rise in Omaha, when I was asking her about the sales tax on food, she told me, she said, you know, when I get that check back every year, you know what I do with it? I said, what? She said, I go to the grocery store and I buy the things I denied myself all year. Instead of buying pork and beans I buy one steak for myself, and she said, I dearly love cream in my coffee but it is too expensive, but