

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Landis. We're on the kill motion, Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Oh, thank you. I'm sorry, my attention was turned. This idea, the question of court fees as revenue raising came to the Government Committee about two years ago and at that time the committee had much the same reaction that Senator Chambers has to LB 717. The difficulty with the policy question that we face in 717 is that I think everybody here supports the Grand Island Training Center, something we all want to see funded. It is, I think in all of our perceptions, an important piece of law enforcement training and one which deserves state support. There is, however, the policy question of how you are going to fund that and on more than one occasion we've talked about special earmarkings. We've talked about cigarette taxes that are sent to one form of particular budget making and generally speaking this Legislature has stood for the principle that general fund obligations should be paid for out of the general fund. 717 violates that policy. I understand it is a convenient way of raising revenues rather like a gas tax or a cigarette tax, sort of a hidden tax that is tacked onto another bill which somebody is compelled to pay. You don't have much choice about paying a ticket or paying court costs. It is not, however, I think a reasonable revenue raising mechanism and I support Senator Chambers' motion. I intend to vote against LB 717 and yet if I were faced with choosing to support the Grand Island Training Center with a general fund appropriation I would be counted among the proponents of that. I would be happy to support that, not only this year but in the coming years. It is an important task to be accomplished and it is an important appropriation but this is not the correct method, the appropriate method to raise the revenue towards that end. We have people in a captive situation when they come to pay a traffic ticket or when they come to pay a violation and we now add on hidden surcharges to supplement the general fund. It is just not a good way to do business. It is not full disclosure and I think it constitutes a misleading and hidden tax on people that we more properly should do through the general fund appropriation, an appropriation I, and I hope the rest of the body, the members of this body would be happy to support in the event it was brought to us by the Appropriations Committee. I will be voting against LB 717 and I hope you will as well and distinguish if you will, the question of what is the appropriate way to raise this money from whether or not we should raise this money. All of us here, Senator Chambers and myself included agree this money should be raised. Our point is this is not the appropriate way to do it by this hidden tax. Thank you.