

April 7, 1982

LB 757

vote aye, opposed nay. The question is, shall debate cease? Please vote so we can proceed one way or the other, otherwise I am going to call on the list. Record the vote.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 7 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Motion carries. Debate ceases. Senator Newell, you may close on your motion to return.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, I have heard the arguments that Senator Warner proposes many times that this is a mechanical responsibility, you get better vision, etcetera, etcetera. But I think Senator Fowler said it best when he says the history doesn't show that that is the way it works. Now let me make a couple of things out of a couple of points. First of all I have always been enamoured by the argument we ought to take politics out of politics except when we need to have politics, and I hear a lot of people saying that, we need to take the politics out of politics except in election years when there is naturally a need for politics. But I would like to remind this Legislature that 49 other states set the sales and income tax rates. Nebraska is the only one that has devised this unique system, and it is a unique system basically so the Legislature can pick and choose when it wants to be responsible. The majority of this body then gets to pick and choose based on the politics of the hour whether or not to do these things or not do these things. Now let me remind you that during the eight years that Jim Exon, who just happens to be a Democrat, sat in the Governor's office this Legislature only once decided to get involved in this process, and that was to lower the income tax, not to raise the income tax or the sales tax but to lower it because the Legislature felt at that point in time that they should take the credit, not the Executive branch but they should take the credit for a reduction, and that seems to me very logical that this is an independent legislative body. It seems very logical we would want to take the credit. It is less logical for me, however, at this point in time to understand why this Legislature determined earlier to take the blame for raising the sales tax rates. And I suggest to you, in fact I more than suggest, I know that it is for political reasons that we decided to take the blame. Now I think that is a legitimate function of this Legislature but not on a sometimes basis, not on a convenient basis and not on a political basis, but on a full-time basis, on an ongoing basis should we set the sales and income tax rates. I would hope this body would do not the political thing but the responsible thing and take over the full authority of setting those sales and income tax rates. I urge this body to adopt the amendment.

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