

Senator Ashford. Senator Rogers, please.

SENATOR ROGERS: I'm sorry. Mr. President, members, I stand to oppose this. I think a lot of the reasons have already been stated, but I think something like this is going to benefit the whole state. I see no reason why some of my corn checkoff money or my sorghum checkoff money should go to support this. And then I guess I have another concern, I wonder when he'll be coming after some of the pork checkoff and some of the beef checkoff to fund this program also. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Ashford, please, followed by Senator Weihing.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. President and members, I just had an opportunity to...and I appreciate Senator Johnson's point about the fact that there are other bills of great importance, and I agree with him and I don't want to belabor this but I've just had an opportunity to read this amendment and I don't particularly see the evil in it that others are seeing. I think that Senator McFarland has raised an excellent point by his bill and I support it and what he is doing, but I think funding is an issue. This is an additional \$80,000 of new money in this A bill and I think that we need to encourage, in state government, the private-public partnership that this amendment seems to foster. Number one, the grain boards are not required to make the contribution to the fund, number one, and, number two, the part about it that I like is the section that refers to donations, gifts, bequests, grants and other contributions. I think if we run this thing correctly, we could probably fund it at a greater level than \$80,000 with contributions from the...could I get a gavel, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Let's hold it down so we can hear the speaker, please. Thank you.

SENATOR ASHFORD: I think that we could probably turn this into a...really a going operation by funding it with gifts and donations from the business community and others who are going to directly benefit from this type of fund and I really am appreciative of Senator McFarland in bringing this bill to us. I totally accept his premise and think it's very much needed, but I really do think that those organizations which are directly benefitting from the services provided need to be involved directly in the funding and I think a lot of this