

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I rise to urge you to support this resolution. While Senator Wesely does not appear to be within sight, I hope he's within earshot. And I would echo Senator Schmit's concern that I hope he'd reconsider on this issue. There are really two issues that Senator Wesely has raised here, both of them desirable goals. One is reduce our reliance on foreign imported oil, and the other one, of course, is deficit reduction. I don't think though necessarily that we can abdicate our responsibility as a Legislature representing a rural Midwestern and western state by simply saying to Washington, go ahead and balance that budget any old way you can, and if it's on the backs of Nebraskans that is fine. I would rise to strongly oppose that approach to advising our representatives in Washington. I think it's a basic issue of fairness, first of all, to western states and particularly rural states with predominantly agricultural economies. While we are accused too often in this body of having rural-urban splits, if you go back to Washington, Lincoln and Omaha are considered nothing more than little country towns. So I think we better all stick together on this issue, because to do otherwise is simply cutting off the economy of Nebraska at the knees. While I agree, as Senator Schmit has put it so well, that deficit reduction is crucial, I think it would be all too easy if states like Nebraska refused to take a position on this for the Congress, because it is an easy and quick fix to say let's just raise the gas tax. I think that's bad policy, it's unfair to states like Nebraska. It would have a major, serious impact not only on our economy but on our ability to maintain one of the critical components of our infrastructure, namely our highways. So I would ask you to reconsider, Senator Wesely, and strongly urge the rest of you to support this resolution. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Chambers, please, followed by Senator Hefner.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, we all know that there have been periods of time when various members of Congress, various organizations would talk about the need to do something about the federal deficit, and nobody wants his or her ox to be gored when time comes to do something to reduce that deficit. Now, it's going to take a general tax increase to do anything about the federal deficit, and everybody knows that, and if we would be honest we would acknowledge it.