

this state to bail out those who have made very unsound, unwise investments in the three states that I've mentioned.

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

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to support this amendment...this resolution because I feel that we do not want to use our gas tax money and also our special fuels tax money for anything else except to keep up the roads. In our state and also in a lot of other states our highways are deteriorating, our bridges are...need to be replaced, need to be rebuilt, so we should be using that money to do this rather than balance a federal budget. In Nebraska, especially in the rural areas, we do not have any mass transportation system, so we are committed to using our automobiles, our pickups and our vehicles a lot more than those that are living in the cities. So it would cause a hardship on our rural people. Our rural people travel greater distances. A lot of them travel 20 or 30 miles to get to a town to buy commodities, to buy their supplies and buy their groceries. So I just feel that by raising the gas tax would be real hard on these people. Senator Wesely says that we need to increase the price so we reduce the consumption. In our particular case, in the rural areas, I don't think this would happen because I really don't feel that people waste their trips. Each trip is accountable. And I think if we want to reduce consumption then we should do it by fuel efficient vehicles, which we certainly are doing, because the cars and the pickups that you buy now get greater miles per gallon than the ones we used to buy 10 or 12 or 15 years ago. I think that maybe what we need to do is also look at a tax credit for oil exploration and development. We used to have that, and it gave these wildcatters and other people that wanted to invest in oil development a tax break for doing this. I think that's one way where we can develop our domestic supplies a lot more. So in the end I would say that we're either going to have to reduce spending on the federal level to reduce our deficit, or else perhaps we need to raise our income tax. Of course we won't be able to decide that, that's for our congressional delegation to do. So I agree that deficit reduction is necessary, but I would hate to see them do that on the backs of those that use petroleum products.

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