

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the opportunity. As expected I rise in opposition to Senator Beyer's motion to kill LB 262. I understand his concern and I think it is an honest issue, an honest difference of opinion between us. But I would just clearly like to take a couple of minutes and explain to you how important this bill is to Douglas County as it's been limited there, too. A number of these facilities or these attractions that would benefit from the addition of this tax are places or are attractions that do not function on a profit. There is not any kind of a large margin where they can do the kinds of necessary capital repairs or upkeep that allows them to maintain the quality that is necessary so that they continue to be attractions for the City of Omaha or Douglas County. And it is important that they have a source of funding in this area that allows them to do just general types of maintenance. We're not going to raise a large amount of money through the passage of LB 262, approximately \$800,000 would be raised. It is not the kind of money that is going to allow for any real types of construction to take place, but basically it will be an improvement or a maintenance fund. It will allow for the types of things, the improvement of a roof, the updating of or accessibility for different types of handicapped individuals to put in these kinds of things to bring plumbing up-to-date, those types of things that your basic admission fees do not allow for, because the problem is that these things need to be available to the public. And the public is entitled to be able to use these facilities on an ongoing basis at the most reasonable costs possible. It is no ones intent to raise the admissions fees in these areas, and some of them don't even charge admission, so that they are prohibitive. But it is also important that they be...continue to be the types of attractions that we can be very proud of here in the State of Nebraska. And there are attractions there that, yes, some of them may be more parochial to the Omaha area, but there are a number of them, such as Fort Omaha, the Western Heritage Museum that Senator Labeledz mentioned, that do contain history and importance that reflects the entire growth and birth of this state. So I think that it is something that does impact the entire state, because we, as state senators, are proud of the establishment of the City of Omaha and the one time territorial capitol of the state. So I think that these types of attractions that would be benefited through LB 262 and the creation of the improvement tax or the capital improvement tax is important and it's extremely important as these facilities