

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: LB 548 is advanced. The next bill is LB 582.

CLERK: LB 582, Mr. President, by Senator Rod Johnson and Senator Dierks. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 18, referred to the Agriculture Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Mr. President.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: The Chair recognizes Senator Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, I was asked to introduce LB 582 for the purposes of allowing the Nebraska Beef Checkoff Board to collect and keep 50 cents of the dollar they now collect. Currently, in Nebraska we collect a \$1.00 per head checkoff fee that is spent for promotion and development and education of our beef products. Nebraska has statutory authority to collect 25 cents. We are the only state, out of 43 state councils, that is not authorized to keep up to 50 cents. We can keep up to 25 cents. Of that 25 cents, 16 cents of it goes out of the state, 15 cents goes to the National Beef Council and one cent to the United State Meat Export Federation. Nine cents of that 25 cents that we collect stays in Nebraska and is implemented and utilized by the Nebraska Beef Checkoff Board. That 25 cents that we collect constitutes about, I think about \$1.6 million that is kept in Nebraska, but 90 percent of that money is actually collected here but sent out of the state. The purpose of the bill and the fact the bill will be important to the Nebraska cattlemen and to the Nebraska Checkoff Program is that we can keep an additional 25 cents to use discretionarily by the Nebraska Beef Checkoff Board. Currently, there are two boards that we are members of, the National Cattlemen's Beef Board, which 75 cents right now goes toward the National Beef Board, but the membership of that board is determined by the number of cattle in the state. Texas usually has been the number one state in cattle on feed and so they have the most membership on that board. That figure is changing as cattle on feed numbers change in Nebraska. But the National Livestock and Meat Board, which is composed of the Beef Council, the Pork Council, the Lamb and Veal Councils, that membership is determined by the number of dollars or the amount of dollars that are actually contributed to the board. Nebraska, if they chose to keep the extra 25 cents and send it in that direction toward the National Livestock and Meat board, could have a greater voice and pick up, potentially, up to two