

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Haberman is announcing some guests under the south balcony, Marcy Nesbitt and Vicki Robinson and children from Imperial. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed. Thank you. We're glad to have you. And also under the north balcony Senator Langford has some guests from Kearney, the City Manager of Kearney, Tom Palmer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs., Palmer. Please stand and be recognized. We're glad to have you also. Senator Hall, would you care to discuss the Wehrbein amendment, followed by Senators Warner and Labedz.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, I rise in support of Senator Wehrbein's amendment to the bill, which is difficult for me to do because I'm not fond of what we oftentimes call the sin taxes. The proposal here though is one that I think deserves a lot of discussion and the reason for that is that Senator Landis is right that I don't think there has been any other bill that on General File has had a funding source put in. But I don't also know of any other bill that has been brought out of committee this year that had a \$4.5 million price tag on it prior to the budget being discussed. And this is an issue when we are talking about basically taking those funds out of the General Fund, as LB 683 would, it is something that the committee, excuse me, the body, a number of members of which have signed, I think over 30, if I counted correctly, have signed onto this bill, feel that it is that important, I think that it is also important enough to provide a funding source for it. I dislike the thought of raising cigarette taxes just because I think that's basically a haphazard way to look at the taxing structure, but we have become accustomed to doing so we do it rather easily. But I also think Senator Wehrbein's point is well-taken, that if this is something that is going to have a 20-year effect, if we are looking at funding this for 20 years out, then it is very appropriate to put the funding mechanism in today on this bill because the wait and see attitude is not a good one, in my opinion, with regard to something that we are going to lock in place an expenditure of this magnitude, of this proportion over a 20-year frame. And I think it only makes good and appropriate sense and it's being, I think, honest with ourselves and with the balance sheet, if you will, that we place this amendment on the bill. It's not an attempt on my part to oppose the bill because I don't think I will support it anyway. But I think if you're going to pass it, you ought to be honest in saying that we're going to supply the funding source for not