

to state openly that I believe we probably would better serve the State of Nebraska over the next two or three years or longer, perhaps, as we head into what I believe are going to be some tough times to save some of this money somehow and feed it back into the General Fund in the future. We have a bill here that hasn't received much attention but it is there. I would even be comfortable with cutting the 100 million, 98.1, or whatever it is, to 50. I can remember two or three months ago 50 million was going to be pretty significant property tax relief, and I guess just to state the ideas we had down the next ten days as something to think about, it would be my opinion to think about perhaps reducing the property tax relief. I am not saying take it away completely but at least consider moderating that and doing something to save some of this money that I think we are going to need badly in the next two or three years. Agriculture is about 30 percent of Nebraska's economy. It is about 18 to 20 percent of the national economy, so regardless of what times are ahead, it is going to have an impact on us quite significantly, and I think we might well be served to remember that these are the good times as we go ahead and we ought to save some of those for the bad times that I...or at least the less desirable times that we may be facing, and if we really want long term property tax relief, which I think we should head toward, it probably ought to be a shift. If that means increasing sale and/or income tax to do that, that would provide the true property tax relief and I know there is a bill out there in LB 611 that is heading toward that, a part of the school finance project, but I'd hope that that would fit in overall to the picture somehow that we could maybe make some progress. And so I see this LB 84 as a temporary thing because there is the temporary money, but, long term, I don't think there can be any true property tax relief until we actually think about raising the sales or income tax to replace that and still have some form of limitation that will slow down the rate of growth in property taxes that are now supporting our local governments. So I just had to say that as a matter of philosophy because I know we have got 10 days to head towards some common ground. The only way we are going to know how to do it is to talk about it, and see where each of us is, because I know all 49 of us have a different agenda. I am sure we all could have balanced the budget in our own mind if we could just push the button. I think I could, too, but we have to get 49 different ideas into that, and I guess the only way we are going to get to it is talk about it.