

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, I am not sure how many of you paid attention to yesterday's newspaper but if you did you saw this article that reads "Fairfield counting on keno to revitalize the village economy" and then there is also another article on it in this morning's World-Herald, but the folks in Fairfield did decide to pass keno gambling in Fairfield, and I guess its a sad reflection either on agriculture or on this state as a whole that the village economy is going to be basically based upon gambling to revive itself. Fairfield has gone through some pretty stressful times. They lost their bank back in 1985. They lost their largest private employer, which was a John Deere dealership, that closed. Both of those have been reopened under new ownership, but the fact is the community has survived. But I am a little disappointed that we have to count on gambling as a way of...maybe the only way, in this case, of Fairfield managing to survive. I think, as I said, it is a sad reflection on us or upon the state as a whole that we can't do a better job in rural Nebraska to provide opportunities for folks in rural areas other than relying on gambling as a way to support its economy. But I know, as Senator Schmit has indicated, there are legal gambling opportunities and there are illegal gambling opportunities, and I, quite frankly, as a personal note, I could care less whether you legalize it or outlaw it. I am not that big a fan of gambling altogether but I enjoy, like most of you, to observe it and to participate in it once in awhile, but it wouldn't hurt me if it went away. But, you know, I just bring that up to you because I find it ironic that in this case a small community is going to build its economy's future on the basis of keno. I think that is a sad reflection on what is taking place in a lot of areas in the state where opportunities have simply dried up and Fairfield is a good community, but it is a farming community that has suffered through the ag recession or depression, however, you want to put it. It is rebuilding but now they are basing their hopes on keno as a way of bringing them around. I wish them the best but I think it is somewhat sad, also.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hartnett.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I simply rise to support LB 767, and I think that we have, with the cooperation of the Department of Revenue, crafted a pretty good piece of legislation where we do restrict this type or lotteries within the State of Nebraska as far as its operations and given