

doing here is in our state law, as it relates to sales tax, is recognizing the differentiation which exists in the Internal Revenue Code. The Internal Revenue Code...and there is a good public purpose for this and it does not just apply to the zoo but it has statewide application so I guess I don't see the opposition to this that the public purpose is that these organizations rely to a great extent upon memberships rather than admissions. Now it so happens that the zoo also has admissions and does collect revenue through admissions but it also depends, to a great extent, upon the membership fees that it gets. The Internal Revenue Service recognizes that a membership fee can include an admission. A 501C3 corporation provides for a membership...membership which includes admission to a particular facility. There is a...there is an over...could I have a gavel...could I have a gavel, please.

PRESIDENT: Yes, sir. (Gavel.) Please, let's hold it down, especially under the balconies it's awfully noisy and comes out here and we can't hear the speakers. Thank you, Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: There does seem to be an overriding public purpose here to encourage individuals to buy memberships as well as seek admission because...because it encourages those individuals to put money into the facility whether or...or into the nonprofit whether or not they use the facilities. That's a good thing. That's a public policy that's a positive because the government has already made the determination that it's...that it is a public...it is a corporation set up for a public purpose. So if we assume, on the bottom line, that we're talking about a public purpose corporation, we're encouraging people to take out memberships whether or not they go there. It seems to me that we, as a state, can be consistent with the federal policy and exempt the membership fee from sales tax because it is not really a transaction or a sale transaction.

PRESIDENT: Senator Ashford, I'm going to interrupt you again. (Gavel.) Please, let's hold it down. (Gavel.)

SENATOR ASHFORD: I...I...

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Let's hold our conversation down, it's getting terribly difficult to hear. I'm sorry, Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I think...I think that if we vote