

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Schmit, please, followed by Senators Chambers and Hall.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, I support the bill as it's amended. It leaves a lot to be desired but it does set a pattern and a precedent. It sets a precedent which I think we ought to...we ought to take a look at. And after reviewing some of the concerns that I have heard expressed by members of the Revenue Committee and members of the Appropriations Committee relative to the need for funds, lack of available funds, plus what I am sure will be a terrifying lack of funds after about this time next year, I think we ought to take a look, Senator Conway and Senator Hall, to see if we couldn't expand this tax on illegal drugs to a tax on illegal gambling. If you were to be able to collect a tax on all illegal gambling that takes place in this state, as Senator Chambers tried a couple of times to tax the bookies, but if it could be done, it would be sort of an admission, sort of like the federal government says, you know, we don't condone it, we don't believe it's there, we don't like it, but just in case you do it, we're going to tax you a little bit. That's what we're doing here. This is illegal, we shouldn't be doing it, but in the event you're going to do it, we're going to make you tax it, pay some taxes on it. If you were to be able to put a tax on all the illegal equipment and all the illegal gambling activity out there, you could finance a really serious war on drugs, you could do a really good job. I don't know that anyone is ever going to have the courage to do so but, at some point in time, when we get our tail in a crack tight enough and the revenue comes short again, we're going to look around for new sources of revenue and I predict that will be one that we'll look at. This is a small step and it isn't really that significant but it's some indication of something we can do and I suppose we ought to do it.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I would like to ask Senator Conway if he...oh, he's still here, a couple of questions about the operation of this. Senator Conway, when you talked about the success in Minnesota, were you speaking terms of a diminution in the amount of drug traffic?

SENATOR CONWAY: That, I don't know whether it's been analyzed, what success, meaning degeneration of revenue, that then could be dedicated to addressing the problem in whatever fashion that