

SENATOR HALL: Okay.

PRESIDENT: And 9, which is emergency clause. So now we're talking about the bingo tax, which is Section 4. Senator Hall, did you wish to speak further about that particular portion,...

SENATOR HALL: Sure.

PRESIDENT: ...at this time?

SENATOR HALL: Why not. Thank you, Mr. President and members. Again, this is the section, as has been pointed out, deals with the bingo. I would urge you to take a look at page 4, again, the bingo history aspect of that handout that you have before you. All we do in this is take 2 percent of the tax away from the cities. It sounds onerous when you say we're going to take a taxing base away from the local subdivisions of government. But really outside of the City of Omaha, the City of Lincoln, you're talking approximately about \$100,000 that is spread out across the remainder of the state. It is not a large dollar item for any of the cities. And the argument has always traditionally been that, but it's \$3,000, or it's \$1,500 that we depend on in our budgets. And, ladies and gentlemen, I would argue that it is a tax that is unfair. It is a tax that the cities or the counties do nothing to achieve. When it was originally put into place they did, they worked very hard, basically they functioned as the Revenue Department because they collected the tax. That no longer is the case, that no longer is the case. And the only people that suffer from this tax are those local charities, those schools, those parishes, those fire departments, the local elderly groups that run a bingo in order to raise funds so that they can operate their not for profit organizations, but yet they pay the highest tax in the country for that privilege, and that's a 10 percent tax 4 percent of which, 40 percent, which goes to the local entities who do absolutely nothing in terms of regulation and oversight. They don't any longer collect that tax and send it to the Department of Revenue. Now, we have talked about this issue for at least six years, six different terms that I have been here, and I think that it is important that we allow these charities to continue to keep those funds in the form of 2 percent. Doesn't sound like a lot when you're talking about less than half a million dollars. We offer amendments to the budget bill of that amount and don't think twice about it when they're adopted and