

schools, but would go, basically, to public school parents who have no need for the tax credit. That having been the case, however, let me say that I am not blind to the need for ways of supporting our existing parish schools. They serve a legitimate educational purpose. They offer a high quality of education, and in the event people are committed to making those schools work, they should flourish and survive. It is not uncommon for both the bingo and the pickle tax to serve as a way of diverting income to private schools into the hands of the state or local government. And while in the past I have been very tough on criminal sanctions, criminal violations, and the misuse of those forms of charitable gaming, when they are appropriately used, it seems to me legitimate to tax them at a level that is not confiscatory. By voting for the reduction of the bingo tax, this is a small adjustment I think that we can legitimately make to allow money to go towards private school education. I intend to vote as well for the pickle tax reduction, although I will tell you this. I remain committed to the idea that the state should be vigilant for pickle card violations. Those are occurring. They are occurring in five and perhaps six figure amounts. Our own Revenue Department recently brought a lawsuit charging an Omaha firm operated by John Jefferson with criminal activity in the operation of bingo, and so there are problems in the bingo and pickle area. On the other hand, when legitimately run, these games do provide relief for private schools and for a wide variety of other charitable purposes. It seems to me that this is the way that I can legitimately inside the Nebraska Constitution and inside my own sense of what is legitimate public policy to find a way to allow public or private schools, rather, to flourish and survive. I would suggest to you that the measures are not that costly, either to the state or to local government. I would suggest to you that it seems to me reasonable that this is the change that we make to give some tools to private schools with which to fight for their life, or with which to flourish, depending on what characterization you think is appropriate for the status of private schools in this state. One of the reasons I like it is because it is based not on the tax code, not on giving credits, but on people going out and asking for and getting charitable contributions in the form of operating pickle games or bingo games. It is a way of voluntarily allowing people who are committed to making these institutions survive to go out and do the work of seeking community support, and that to me is a reasonable burden to place on them. Having placed that burden on their shoulders, the tax rates, it seems to me, should be reasonable and not