

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I, too, I know people refer to this all the time as an Ak-Sar-Ben bill. I feel like Senator Schellpeper, we have other communities and particularly Fonner Park, I guess that's about the second largest, but we have Columbus and South Sioux City and the state fair. In my community, Fonner Park is about the biggest or the only really...besides maybe Stuhr Museum, a true tourist attraction or that is available since the defeat of the convention center. And, as I mentioned before, 107 events, and that is from the state 4-H show is there. There was a big red barn donated by one of the business people in Grand Island, I think at \$110,000 for state horse shows and racers. Again, back to the agriculture input, I believe there was...it is figured that there are 540 eighty-acre farm tracts. There are 1,300 foals that were raised, colts in Nebraska last year. Fonner Park's payroll is a large thing in Grand Island. That payroll is over \$880,000 a year, about 85 employees, 200 during the racing season. That does mean a lot. And the same thing as Senator Hefner said, a \$300 million industry. We're talking more than just putting a dollar in of my grocery money or something and hoping to get an immediate dollar back. The sales tax of Fonner Park last year was to the Nebraska Department of Revenue \$33,000, and sent to the IRS \$159,000; their total payroll, \$324,000. So, in essence, and all over from...these are figures from about 1980, \$34 million payment to other industries by the whole racing industry, back some time ago. So the state, I'm sure, would lose a lot more revenue should these tracks close than they are by giving some additional tax loss. I might also mind you that we need to pass this bill this year, otherwise we will revert back to the 4 percent tax and that is particularly a concern of mine from Fonner Park and it has happened in a number of times and we have adjusted the tax because of the fact that Fonner Park runs early in the season and you cannot give tax back that you have collected. So they...doesn't seem fair but that's how it comes out. They would, again, be a loser. Something was said on the tracks and I...or on the floor in regards to maybe some of the pickle card suppliers and, as Senator Schmit said, I've heard that many times, they can bring them in by the truckload so who are you kidding? I want to remind the body that the Racing Commission last year did a very thorough investigation or the Racing Commission was investigated and I know we talk about five and six million dollars now that we don't pay, I don't think it would be that, with the competition. What we're seeing now is the competition from the new track in Kansas City, Minnesota, Iowa and so on and I