

know if he's going to make it or not.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time.

SENATOR SCHMIT: He won't make it unless he's able to take a little of that weight off and shorten the distance a little bit in years to come. Time is up?

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time. Umm-hmm. Senator Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, I rise as well to support the committee amendments and the bill. Senator Schmit has indicated there is parts of this bill I don't necessarily love but it is at least a bill that I think recognizes that some things have to be done to help the horse-racing industry of Nebraska and that seems to be the central focus of this bill is helping Ak-Sar-Ben, Fonner Park, State Fair Park and others survive these rather turbulent years. And I realize whenever you're the big boy on the block somebody is going to come hunting you down and usually in this Legislature the Ak-Sar-Ben is the target for a lot of jokes and a lot of ire by this Legislature over policy that we set on taxes as it relates to other areas of tax policy. But, you know, the question comes down to...and this is for Senator Chambers, I guess, are we going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg? And I think Ernie would say, well, that goose is laying either silver or bronze eggs instead of gold eggs but \$153 million was...a million dollars was spent last year or wagered in parimutuel wagering last year in this state. That's a lot of money, to me, and that's a lot for this state as that money filters down into the breeders and the horse race managers and I think it's got to do some good for the state. I don't necessarily like the industry. Ak-Sar-Ben hasn't necessarily done anything to improve my way of life but it at least has provided a way of life for a lot of people who are involved in the horse-racing industry and I think that we have to recognize, as Senator Schmit has indicated, that there is a lot of competition out there for the...for dollars that are...that are out there for gambling and we have to change with the times and I think that Ak-Sar-Ben and Fonner and other tracks are trying to do more to meet that competition. But they're still going to need some help and whether we like it or not, unless we want to kill the goose, I guess we're going to have to go ahead and, you know, bite the bullet and go ahead and provide these breaks again for the industry which I think are warranted as long as