

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, the amendment that we have before us is something that actually I've wanted to do for a long, long time. I tried to do it last a couple of years ago and the body chose not to agree to it. I hope the mood is a little bit different and we can get an agreement on this particular amendment. It is certainly not hostile in my opinion to either side. Senator Dierks, I think can agree with the amendment. I think Senator Baack would be able to agree with the amendment at some point. In essence, the amendment would change Nebraska statutes, and for those that are still thinking about whether they want to support the bill or not support the bill, I would ask that maybe they want to start asking themselves what actually is in the bill and what this amendment would do if it is agreed to in regards to whether or not LB 577 might actually be better for Nebraska than the existing law that we have which, in essence, did absolutely nothing. My amendment would do the following: It would change Nebraska statutes so that a minor would not be able to possess tobacco products as well. Right now Nebraska statute says that a minor cannot purchase tobacco products, they cannot use a tobacco product if they are a minor, but there is nothing in the law about possession. And if any of you have been, you know, one of the things I was fascinated on a couple of years ago or however many years ago it was on LB 48 was Senator Dierks speaking and the dentists' association speaking that we want to do something to help the kids. We got to stop kids in schools from using the products. This amendment would probably put more teeth than any type of law that Senator Dierks or anyone else could pass. In fact, this amendment alone does ten times more than LB 48 will ever hope to accomplish which, by the way, it accomplishes nothing, and actually more than 577 will accomplish in the long run. If any of you have ever been in a school system, whether public or private, and you've tried to stop a student from smoking, there is only one way you can do that in the school system. I know Senator Smith is aware of that. I don't know if Senator Cudaback is, if Senator Rasmussen, but the only way you can stop a child from smoking in school is to actually catch them in the act. So, ladies and gentlemen, if you are in a school and you are trying to cut down smoking, you have to, it's a spy versus spy game. The kids go to their designated areas that they think they can get away, usually it's in the bathroom, and they'll post their guards and the faculty members then will try to sneak in their very quickly before the