

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak very briefly and I wish Senator Hall were here because this is something that I wanted him to hear. I was listening to the discussion a little bit earlier in the exchange between the folks that were talking about the Schmit and Rogers amendment. And Senator Hall indicated that this was a very good philosophical discussion and since that time some of the members have stood up and they have brought some other issues that need to be discussed and I think that's something we should take into consideration as one more issue to add to that list, Senator Hall. I'm really glad you came back because I would like to have you have a little paper out and pencil and list all the things that you will be looking at as you look at this whole tax issue during the interim, I hope, and then for next year resolve it all. But I think we should also look at cost of government and what that...what it is that's created the position that Nebraska is now in, in the nation. My understanding is we're now 19th in the nation in taxation and yet I have a handout that was given to me by a senator on the floor here which indicates that our average income in Nebraska is much lower in comparison than the national average. So maybe it's time for us to take a look at the size of government, the things that we're doing not only in the name of government but in services and programs and in the way we're delivering those services and programs. The other day I was asking some questions in the budget about the Medicaid waiver that could have been utilized and that they turned back money from. That's an example. I know it isn't going to be an easy thing to do but I think that's something that we're going to have to take, you know, grapple with and get a hold on. The other thing is that it's been brought to my attention by a number of not only constituents but the local newspaper in my district that they haven't heard us talking about cutting anything or trying to cut taxes in this discussion about the whole tax issue. Maybe we should be looking at that as a part of this whole story about what is being done as the way we provide services, how can we better make use of those services, the economy of what we're doing for folks right now and maybe need some revamping in the system and I would be very supportive of that although I know it would be very difficult to do. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Elmer.

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to