

Senator Smith, if I can get 2 percent from all the keno games in the state for the thoroughbred racing. I'd like to do that, but I don't think we can get that done at this time of the year, so I may be back next year with a bill, but I do support the Smith-Hall amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Madam Chair, members of the body, I have a question for Senator Johnson and let me preface it by explaining why I'm even entering into this debate. It's not because I have a major concern about the issues here before us, other than the one and that being the one of the Omaha Royals. I do have a major concern about that one, but I'm afraid somebody reviewing this debate may construe the fact that we're all agreeing that Senator Johnson's amendment is blatantly unconstitutional and we, as a Legislature, just to have a little fun are passing an unconstitutional bill here. But as I understand your provision, Senator Johnson, you have isolated counties that have race tracks dedicating a portion of this keno operation to the purses there for what purports to be a very logical reason and that is that those keno operations like the one in Ralston and like the one we're expecting to have in the City of Omaha will negatively impact upon the people going to the track, so there is a logical reason for including counties with keno operations as opposed to all counties together. Is there not some logical reason for doing that?

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Yes, Senator, there is. When we discussed my 2 percent amendment on Select File, or...yeah, Select File, the last time we took this bill up, I distributed a graph I believe to the body which showed a sharp decrease in thoroughbred racing receipts and also dog racing receipts across the river in Council Bluffs and showed a dramatic increase in the keno games in the Omaha area, so there is a direct relationship between the downturn in collection of revenue through thoroughbred racing in Omaha with that of the keno games which has gone up dramatically and probably cut into the revenue source that the thoroughbred racing, not only in Omaha, but Grand Island, Columbus, Atokad have also seen decreases in their handle as well.

SENATOR WITHEM: Okay, thank you for...I just thought it important to clarify that. I support the Smith-Hall amendment. I think it's a good idea to do this and recognize that committee