

involved with Senator Nelson and Senator Dierks' leadership, and Senator Schellpeper as well, as we looked at the issue of banning this, the giveaway of smokeless tobacco. We took that step after several years of discussion and examination. We have now had it in effect for a couple more years. I think it has not been detrimental to the industry in the way that they may have thought it might. At the same time, it has been positive in terms of the public health of the citizens of the State of Nebraska. I understand why the tobacco industry continues to want to see this changed. They're fearful that other states will follow Nebraska's lead. I would hope that they would. We were one of the first, if not the first state, to take this step of trying to ban the free giveaway of tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and we are charting a course that maybe others will follow and so there's naturally a desire to not have other states follow Nebraska's lead in adopting this proposal and the tobacco industry is putting a lot of effort into seeing that it is repealed in substance. Let me go back to some of the arguments that were made the weeks ago that we last discussed this issue. Senator Landis and Senator Kristensen talked about the role of government and went back to the role of government as envisioned by our forefathers and how we've lost our way because we have government intervening in this particular area and government ought not to step into the breach and set some parameters in this area. We ought to allow people to be free to do what they wish, even if it harms themselves. Well, it's always a very difficult issue to try and decide where to draw the line on government and its role. Government and its restrictions placed on the freedom of our people has to be done with wisdom and foresight, has to be done with careful consideration of the ramifications of that action, and we ought not to restrict people's freedom inappropriately. We ought to allow people to be as free as possible in this nation. That's what our founding fathers based our nation on and what, I think, we've adhered to through these many years. But I think government has decided that it has an appropriate role in many more areas than it has in the past, and I think appropriately in this particular area. I think when you talk about it being inappropriate for the government to decide that you cannot get free samples of tobacco, and why would we make that step and not take it in other areas, and I've thought about that since that discussion and it comes down to this--tobacco is an addictive drug. And if you allow the free distribution of it, you allow for individuals, perhaps unknowingly, in many cases unknowingly, utilizing that and becoming addicted to it and ultimately