

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President, members of the Legislature, this amendment will require a vote of the people before such a fee as this can be assessed. Senator Morrissey, Senator Horgan, Senator Ashford, and others have spoken very sincerely about the problem that they perceive with solid waste. Senator Morrissey, I believe he is the one who said that people need to know what the cost is. There is no better way to generate a discussion of an issue that confronts the populace than to hit them in the pocketbook and give them the opportunity to vote yea or nay. If there is an attempt and an intent to raise the awareness of the public on the question of all aspects of environmental issues, this is a way to do it. As Senator Haberman pointed out, all of the things that they talk about this fee going to do are being done now. There is no way to determine what would be done with the money that would be freed up by this fee. Senator Horgan said that property taxpayers are paying for the collection of garbage, and I hope he includes among those property taxpayers renters. Renters, and I hope Senator Horgan and others are aware that renters pay property tax. When you attempt to do what Omaha is trying to do with this bill, it is the start of an effort, in my opinion, to allow Omaha, through the actions of the Legislature, to impose other types of fees, other types of taxes, other types of assessments. Omaha is not the most efficiently operated city in the state. I don't think the public expects cities to be operated efficiently. The voters and the nonvoters will often criticize whichever administration happens to be sitting in office, but when time comes to vote, all of those things are forgotten. Whoever packages the candidate well, whoever lines up the powerful interest groups that can sway the voters is going to win the election. But when it comes to a matter such as this, I think the public will pay attention because there is a very direct connection between how they vote and what the consequences of that vote very well may be. So what my amendment would say, and I make it clear, I am opposed to the bill, but if this bill is enacted, this amendment, if attached, would require a vote of the majority of the people voting at a regular election before a fee, such as this, can be put in place. There are other propositions before a city can levy a tax which will require a vote of the people. There are certain gambling operations which can be put in place through a vote of the people. So having a vote such as this is not unusual at all. As a matter of fact, I believe that there are some people who are going to come to us before this session is over and say that people in a certain other area of this