

think we need to consider those things. What this bill will do, it will raise property taxes, raise property taxes because the counties and the cities are going to have to increase property taxes to keep up with their road system. And we certainly have a lot of poor roads and poor bridges. In fact, some bridges are...are really in bad shape. Also, it's going to increase the variable gas tax because Nebraska has gone on an accelerated highway building program. We're starting on an expressway system, and we certainly need that. And so I just feel that it's very poor policy when we take the money out of the Highway Trust Fund for some other reasons. It's going to increase property taxes and it's going to increase gas taxes. And if we use it for teachers this year, next year it will probably be for law enforcement people, the next year for something else, and it just could go on and on. And this is what I'm concerned about. And so I would urge you to vote against the advancement of this bill on this day.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Hefner. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I believe I'll call the question at this time.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Do I see sufficient seconds? I don't see sufficient seconds, so we'll proceed with debate. Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President, members. As I said before the vote, this becomes a very confusing matter at this point because we have two separate bills in one bill. I guess I'll make a couple of points first to make it absolutely clear. I supported, on General File, this...the teachers pay bill because I have been a cosponsor of this bill from the beginning, since I've been in the Legislature. But I can tell you right now that if the cut in LB 1272 is not on Final Reading of this bill, I will not vote for this bill. I believe, and I will be firm in this, that the reason that we crafted LB 1272 was to create a balanced budget this year to enable us to do some programs that make sense, made sense to us in the Appropriations Committee. It's, as Senator Warner rightly says, it's costing the political subdivisions \$1,700,000...the school districts \$1,700,000 to do this. We made that choice, we made that policy decision in the committee and the body accepted that when they rejected the Robinson amendment to strike that portion