

March 24, 1992

LB 89, 1272

SENATOR WITHEM: It's obviously not going to be meeting any sense of fruition, so we ought to get...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time, Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...on with our work. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Crosby, you're next.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. Senator Withem said some of the things that I wanted to say too, but the point to me with this whole discussion about whether we'll tax pop or tax beer or whatever, we have lost sight completely of what LB 89 and 91 were supposed to do and when you talk about raising the tax on gallonage of beverages, you are talking about raising taxes. The point with the highway trust money that LB 1059 puts into that fund is that that money is already there. You're not raising any taxes. It's already there. And I've heard all the arguments about the variable gas tax rate and I know that would change and that kind of thing, but that is not so obvious to the average taxpayer as putting an extra tax on pop or beer. And I think that the remarks made about kids buying pop to pay the teachers and so on is degrading to a professional...group of professional people that are out there teaching our children and this is what I keep...this morning we are not talking about what I think is the kernel of this whole discussion is, this Legislature is not dedicated to funding LB 89 and/or 91. When these bills were brought to me originally, my teacher team and one part of that team in particular is a math teacher and she is really very good at explaining and showing how figures work and come together to do what a bill says it's going to do and the point to me was this. That there are teachers in small school districts who can work for 20 years and still make \$14,000. In Omaha and Lincoln that's not the case, but in those small school districts there is a problem and it isn't that we were telling local school districts what to do. What we were trying to do was give them some funds so they could help bring those levels up for those low paid teachers because if you do not, then those low paid teachers, unless they are dedicated to staying in those areas forever, they leave because they can get better pay somewhere else. So I wish you would think about that this morning because I do think we've lost sight of what we are talking about the