

SENATOR ABOUD: ...government right now.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: ...property tax. They're all non...nonprofit.

SENATOR ABOUD: So we have local government already helping to subsidize these racetracks throughout the state.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: That's right.

SENATOR ABOUD: Okay. Thank you for that explanation. I think it's important to understand that the horse racing industry, if it is important to the state, we should take the steps necessary to help support that industry and one of the ways that the state helps support industries that are beneficial to the state, that promote industry in this state, is by outright grants from the General Fund and maybe that is something that we should be looking at. I hear nothing but glowing reports about this industry and that's an approach that I think some members of this body would be willing to support and maybe that's an amendment that should be added. I do have some concerns, though, about the horse racing industry in that, having been in the body since 1983, we've always heard that the Ak-Sar-Ben was just around the corner on turning a profit, and I really hoped, I really hoped that that was the case, but, as I...in the handout that I sent to the members of the body, since 1985 we've seen a continual decline in that handle. We're close to 100 million dollar handle now and I...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ABOUD: ...the way these numbers are going, it just doesn't look very promising. And my concern, as was mentioned earlier by one of the speakers, I believe Senator Schellpeper, is that maybe five years from now we will not have a horse racing industry in this state and what's going to happen when the state imposes a state lottery and more of the gambling dollars is taken away? You know, one of the arguments in favor of gambling that I have heard involving the state lottery is that the people support it, the majority of the people support it and they would support it in the form of putting dollars into a state lottery. Maybe we should follow the advice that the people are giving us. Maybe they're saying to us that we prefer different types of gambling. We should look to that approach, I