

we have been doing for the past three years. I will stop there, and I will let Senator Landis, because I think he had more information on this amendment than what I do. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Schellpeper. I do have a number of lights on, and, Senator Ashford, your light was on. Did you wish to address this?

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker and members, and I would like to address this amendment. Just a little bit of background, I opposed the purchase of Ak-Sar-Ben by Douglas County, and one of the reasons why I did that, and I know many other members in this body were concerned about the timing of the purchase of Ak-Sar-Ben by Douglas County, and that that was one of their main concerns, that there was not a good plan for the development of the Ak-Sar-Ben facility; there was not a good plan for the racing facility; and none of those things have been implemented, but there was a decision to go forward anyway with the purchase without that planning being done. And that was of a great deal of concern to me, and I know it was of others, and the 11 other Omaha senators who signed, or other senators, including many Omaha senators who signed the vote of the people amendment on the keno at Ak-Sar-Ben. The other concern that I have had throughout this whole process of the Ak-Sar-Ben issue is the process that started back when there was a bill to change some rules in the Douglas County Fair Board to give it the authority to buy Ak-Sar-Ben. I think if the county board had been much more straight with what they were trying to do, instead of trying to be what I considered in many...on many of the issues subterranean about what they were trying to do, I think it would have been a lot easier for us in this body to deal straight up with what was trying to be accomplished. One of the concerns that I have is the representation that was made to the people in the City of Omaha, Douglas County, that there would be no tax dollars spent on the purchase of Ak-Sar-Ben. And, obviously, obviously, there are going to be tax dollars spent on this issue. We, right here, are voting on giving tax incentives to Ak-Sar-Ben and Douglas County in order for it to operate its track in this bill. That is a tax incentive. Those are tax dollars that are being spent, and, obviously, there are going to be tax dollars spent in the maintenance of Ak-Sar-Ben by Douglas County. So I wish from this point on that we could start talking about this issue straight on, straight up, forward, straight, no more turns or bends in the road, no more...no more suggestions to the public that aren't, in fact,