

reality it is a tax bill. And the portion in the bill that addresses taxes is the one that says, where is the money going to go, for what purposes is it going to be used? As you well know we allow for community betterment to be the use for purposes of those taxes, whether collected at the local or the state level. This proposal has a compromise built in. It is basically a state regulated proposal. It is one that recognizes the input of the local communities in terms of some regulation and oversight. It recognizes all the areas traditionally where we have gambled, that being the horse tracks, that being the kenos, that being the licensed on-sale liquor establishments. They're all brought into the mix, they're all recognized. The charities are recognized in terms of their participation in the past with regard to gambling. Depending on your perspective there, it may be hypocritical but the fact of the matter is they've been there, they're there and some of them want to remain there. These are all the kinds of things that had to be taken into consideration when looking at this. For me, the principal issue and the driving force behind it is not only the competition that we see across the river in Council Bluffs which happens to border my district, it's the competition that you see in Sioux City, that you see along the entire northern border that's out there as we border Colorado with the limited casino gambling that they have out there on a local option basis, but it's also the competition that I see and realize that is taking place right now. It has had a dramatic impact in the last month as it has been approximately five weeks that the casino over in Council Bluffs has been opened, the impact it's had on small businesses in my district. Now they happen to be bars, they happen to be restaurants, they are taverns, but they are employers. They are small businessmen and women. They operate those establishments and try to compete for business on a day-to-day basis. They pay their taxes, they hire employees, they create jobs. They are individuals that have been paying their taxes for a number of years. They've been good citizens. They haven't asked for tax breaks, they haven't come to the Legislature and said we have to have this in order to stay or we're going to leave. They basically have trudged along and asked that they be considered as well when these types of proposals are offered and that's really one of the principal reasons that I offer it...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR HALL: ...outside of the economics of the measure.