

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Hillman, your light is next.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members. I guess, what I would like to talk a little about is economic development and where the State of Nebraska finds itself. The revenues keep increasing and have been, we've been very fortunate with that. For the most part, I don't think Nebraska is in very bad shape. I think we're in very good shape. But something we needed to do on an ongoing basis is to take some of that revenue and invest it back into the state. Economic development is an investment. Every year I think you should look at what is the investment we're making in this state when it comes to economic development. There's a premise that you either go ahead or you fall back, you can't stand still. You can't stand still in economic development. Every year you have to address the needs because they change on an annual basis and even quicker is how we are going to constantly address the needs to be able to look at job creation and job retention in the State of Nebraska. I think we make a lot of investments in economic development in many ways. Roads are economic development, health care is economic development, education is economic development. All of those tend to look at the quality of life that you have in Nebraska, and that's one of our biggest selling points is the quality of life. But in addition to that, you are going to have to make a direct cash investment in economic development. And if we don't choose to do something every year, we will continue to fall behind, no matter what those revenues are, no matter how tight we see our budgets. If we don't continue to try to be progressive and make some investment in this state, we will lose out and we'll lose out every year. I think Senator Engel's bill is a good bill, it's something that a lot of communities have looked for, for a long time. And if you bracket it, we're making priorities, and I can understand that with the budget, but I hope you're not doing it with the thought that that's the end of the bill, that it won't come back or we won't look at it again, because many of us will, even if we don't want to support the bracket and we may, we're going to look at it again next year and it will be back because you need to make that ongoing investment in the State of Nebraska, or we will continue to lose out and slip behind. I want to thank Senator Engel for bringing the bill and, hopefully, you'll think very carefully about your vote in bracketing it. Thank you.