

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Time.

SENATOR WARNER: ...what is occurring.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. I rise simply to bring to the body a perspective that interestingly enough when I came to the Legislature, during those last three years, probably the greatest message that's been given to me over and over and over again is that we need to do something about taxes, and we need to do something about property taxes. And this seemed to be an issue that was paramount on people in my district's mind, and so, obviously, I had a lot of conversations in that regard. It is interesting to note, though, since the decision has come about to attempt to make some corrections or some changes in the way we tax people, the calls that I've been getting, and I imagine many of you are getting the same calls that I am, and those calls are coming from the people who think and feel that they are the ones that are going to be affected by the change in the direction we are going. For example, I've had calls from airport authorities, county school superintendents, members of ESUs, ag societies, clerks of the district court, everyone of them having the same message--we need to do something about taxes, but you can't eliminate or reduce the amount of funding that I'm now needing in order to perform the task that I've been assigned to do as an elected or appointed official. So it's interesting to me that the attitude for the last three years has been we got to do something, and when we try to do something, the attitude is, it is okay if you do it as long as you don't do it to me. And so I guess the point that I am trying to make is I'm supportive of LR 297 because I think that for three years the message has been we got to do something. For the last few months, it is somewhat different, but the issue is still out there, and so I guess even though I know there is going to be some harsh decisions made, and, certainly, some dissatisfaction by some of the entities who are going to be the most affected, I guess we need to move forward and do what people have been asking for for a long time. That, basically, is the message that I wanted to bring forth, and I would give a couple of minutes of time that I have left to Senator Hartnett.