

SENATOR COORDSEN: Time. Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Thank you very much. I was going to call the question, but we had called it and some of the senators said that they would like to speak after me, so I won't do so. But I will make a comment about some comments from Senator Hilgert and some of the other Catholic senators on the floor about, in another conversation that I had about this being a religious issue. This is not a religious issue, in my opinion. I am also in the Catholic church. None of the people I have talked to at church have asked to have slot machines in our church. So I want to make that perfectly clear that Senator Hilgert does not speak for all the churches, certainly in Omaha or the state of Nebraska, about wanting slot machines in our churches. We are charitable in our church. We do do a lot of charity and we do a lot of community functions, and we do that with our own hard work and labor and no one has asked me to put slot machines in their church or bingo or anything else. So I just want to make that clear because it keeps coming up with several of the senators that this is for charitable organizations. None of the charitable organizations that I've talked to have asked for this expansion of gambling. In fact, most of the organizations I know that are being hurt by this, they recognize that they are being hurt by this, but they don't turn around and say, therefore expand gambling. So I want to make that clear that that is not what I am hearing and that is not the, not the official or, in my district anyway, the unofficial position of that church. I also want to make it clear that I talked to a real estate person just last night at a function with the Jaycees who told me that already there are individuals losing their homes in the Omaha area over this issue. So it does have social consequences. But I think what has been the most focus from the information that I've gotten from the people within my district, and most of the discussions that I've had has been on the economic issues of expanding gambling into Nebraska. It's been proven that businesses do not want to locate in areas of expanded gambling. It's been proven that it hurts economically within the areas where it is. It's like a sponge and soaks up all of the dollars from a lot of the other businesses, the restaurants and...this is not something like Las Vegas that you're going to start for a tourist attraction. This is something that you're going to start in your own community, and you're going to suck it dry of any of that discretionary, and "undiscretionary" in a lot of cases, income that individuals