

Constitution of the state of Nebraska be presented to the voters and that it be in such a form that we can then legislatively enact the necessary elements of the package in order to achieve what we have determined, not only in the Revenue Committee but also through first round debate on the legislative floor of what is a reasonable package for property tax relief. I think it's obvious that the...this is not the Revenue Committee shoving something down people's throats, since we've heard...just heard a very fervent speech on the part of Senator Schellpeper, who's a member of the Revenue Committee, in favor of the Schrock amendment, so I think that argument is not one that should play at all. The fact is...has the Revenue Committee put in hard work on this package? Absolutely. Absolutely. We've spent countless hours working on this package. Is that a good reason to vote for it? No. But the fact is that the work that we have put in has led the Revenue Committee to put together probably the best, and when I say "best" I mean most realistic, package of combination of limitations on spending, limitations on taxation and elements that could lead to consolidation and more efficiency of governmental services that is possible, that is politically possible I would venture to say. Again, this is not an ideal package, but at the same time when you look at what the Schrock amendment does it is a major crack in the armor in that it does say, okay, there's a segment that we need to have some protection for and some of the former speeches, Senator Beutler's in particular I recall, have pointed out the fallacy in this and that if we start down this road we are going to quickly get into very deep quicksand as far as this goes. In reality, all segments are taking hits. As Senator Withem indicated, there are things that I will be voting for in this package that, frankly, in previous years I would not have supported, things that affect education, that affect, you know, funding for education, that affect funding for cities and counties, and tax levies for all those entities as well. I think the overriding thing that we need to look at when we're talking about this package is the fact that people do want to see some sort of combination of spending limitations and property tax levy limitations probably, at least for the near future, until we determine what the impact is of governmental consolidations, of cooperative efforts that can be made to make the delivery of services more efficient and more cost-effective at the local level. And if that occurs down the line, this is not something that I've supported, but if it does become apparent down the line that the state needs to assume some of