

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Abboud. Don't see Senator Abboud. Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I just rise in opposition to the Schrock amendment, that we are back in time as if the Schrock amendment had not been adopted. It is pending, and, again, for the reasons that have been stated in the past, I would urge members to not vote in favor of this amendment at this point. I don't think we need to add additional protection for particular classes of property in the constitution. If this amendment were adopted, then I think those of us that have districts with a lot of residential property will be pushing for an amendment that would provide the same sort of protection for residential property, and then you end up just going down this spiral down the road to where we end up exempting more and more, classifying more and more, and, historically, we have been able to avoid that in Nebraska. We do have the constitutional authority to treat ag land differently than other property. This Legislature has maintained that at that 80 percent level, even in the face of the Supreme Court on a couple of different occasions when they ruled unconstitutional what the citizens of the state thought that they were putting in the constitution. I don't think it needs to be in the constitution. I think by voting to place this in the constitution that it exacerbates some problems that we have and I would urge you to vote no on the amendment.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Will. I just wanted to make a couple of observations. First of all, I don't see Senator Kristensen here but he made a comment that go ask your people, are taxes too high? No, I don't think so. Well, he hasn't talked to any people in my district or he would not make that statement, and I want to tell you that we've had, as many of you know, a battle on the boundary on the Missouri River, do you know why those people want to go to Missouri? I will tell you why. Their taxes over there would be about 4 to 5 dollars an acre while they are paying 17 to 24 dollars an acre in Nebraska, right across the river from one another, the same kind of soil, might even be better over there. So you think the taxes aren't too high? You just talk to those people and see how quick they tell you. I have a number of people living down