

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, I'm glad that Senator Schimek talked about the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce letter, which has been passed out to you, only because...not to be necessarily critical of it, but only to point out to you what this chamber of commerce, what probably every chamber of commerce in the state will propose, what the State Chamber of Commerce will propose. I'm trying to point out to you how very difficult, and I think she was trying to point out to you how very difficult this situation is that we are assuming for the future. Just think about the numbers for a minute. If we have \$250 million of school money to be made up, how much of it do we make up? How much of it do we say will come about by savings, will have savings in a certain amount, will force some efficiencies? Although, school consolidation is the main efficiency, and we're not doing anything about that at this point. Let's say 60 percent we're going to replace. Is there anybody here that thinks they can do...get better than 40 percent efficiency out of that figure? I think realistically we all realize we've got to replace at least 60 percent, that's a very conservative figure, that's \$150 million. The half a cent sales tax that's being suggested to you today, I think I misspoke earlier and said it was \$80 million, it's really only \$70 million. So that means out of a minimum amount that you would want to replace, this isn't even half of that. That means if we do nothing now, all of that we have to do in one of the next two years in order to save the schools. Well, I guess that makes it easier for the 24 or 25 that are up for election this time around, they won't have to make that decision at the critical point in time before their election. Makes it pretty difficult for those who are up for election next time to vote for that whole pile of change all at once. It's going to be traumatic. Seems to me it might make a little sense for us to share the pain and do some of it this time so that all of it next time is not solely borne by those up for election next time. In any event, my main point is it's a huge hunk for all at once. And the chambers of commerce are not only saying we do not want you to raise income tax, we do not want you to raise sales tax, we do not want you to expand the sales base or the sales tax base to include services, we want you to keep on expenditure lids. Furthermore, furthermore, and here's...here's the thing to really consider, here's the thing to really consider, furthermore, they announce in this letter, we're going on the attack, we want a cap on state expenditures, we want a cap on state expenditures and we want it now. Well, my friends,