

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

March 11, 1999      LB 148

easy decision and I know it's difficult when the need is so great and the money looks to be available. I would just ask that you consider the importance of making that decision right now at this time. The potential impact of the investment income from the trust funds created under 1070 cannot be overestimated, but the potential is truly enormous. It's important, however, that we don't begin to eat away at that potential right now and compromise our chance to maximize the opportunity for improved healthcare and potential tax relief to all Nebraskans in the future. I believe that LB 1070 is a good fiscal policy and I ask that you stay the course by exercising patience on this issue. The Excellence in Health Care Council is yet to be appointed. I know that they have many individuals that they are interviewing and processing; but until that is done, I think it would be wrong to tap into these funds at this time. Even after the committee is formed, there will probably be a six-month period where they need to work on their rules and regulations and their processes that they will use on accepting requests for grants. It was interesting when this bill was initially introduced by Senator Byars, I think I was the first one to say this could be an excellent use for LB 1070, and I believe that to this day, and it is designated as number six underneath the list of items that we were talking about or that I explained earlier that includes respite care, so I don't have any problem with a respite care bill. I support that. I supported it in committee and on this floor. It's just that I think we are putting the cart before the horse at this particular time. I would certainly envision that once the structure is set up that an issue like this could come before the committee, be laid out on the table, as well as all the other items that are listed here. Senator Kiel had an issue certainly on funding of AIDS to poor individuals, or AIDS cocktails, which are those medicines that they need to maintain a lifestyle. That's certainly a public health issue and that also could be put on the table also. Certainly the trauma system, many of the other items that come before us can all be put out there and then this committee needs to look at those and decide what can they fund, what is the priorities with the available dollars that are there. Certainly the IGT funds that are in the fund at this time and are drawing interest, there's another 55 million that will be added to that, next year another 50 million will be added, and so we do have some dollars available there that I think that we