

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

April 13, 1999 LB 505

I read the bill correctly, it says that two cents is supposed to go the State Patrol for enforcement. Now I don't know what the State Patrol is going to do about enforcement of the cigarette excise tax. I don't know if that's sting operations. Do they find a youthful member of the state...youthful-looking member of the State Patrol and have them go into a convenience store and see if they can purchase something without showing their identification? Do they hire kids to go into a store and buy? Senator Landis says that kids get cigarettes not by going across state borders to buy a more convenient place; they get them by stealing them. Are we going to enforce the laws against theft? Are we going to...what is the State Patrol going to do with two cents of cigarette tax that will be, by estimations, over \$2 million? What will the State Patrol do to enforce cigarette excise taxes? Now some of that, I understand, can be used by local jurisdictions, but what are the local jurisdictions going to do? And then the balance of it goes out where it would be used in a way that isn't defined very well at all. That's for efforts in the Department of Health to reduce smoking in a broad range of activities. I don't know whether that's going to be a media campaign,...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: ...whether that's going to be...Senator Kiel has come to me and suggested one of the things that we ought to do, and I think Senator Jensen might second this suggestion, is that we do something to make the products that assist people to stop smoking more readily available; that we should, maybe in some sense, subsidize those things. Is that what we should do with that remaining 22 million or more dollars? But there's nothing in the bill that suggests to us in any degree of specificity what our Department of Health would be doing with approximately \$22 million a year and how that would be utilized. Would it be utilized in an efficient and effective way? Arguably, as I've noted, those are appropriations issues, but you should understand that by adopting Senator Landis' amendment you're bypassing that kind of careful examination. You're simply putting \$22 million into an agency, Senator Peterson will be grateful to us for that eventually I think, but we're going to put \$22 million into an agency.