

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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LB 880

Something that distressed...let me not say "distressed"...it's in the Omaha World-Herald, par for the course. It's on page 19, with a large headline: "Convention Center Funds Earmarked". And they talk about some money that the city council set aside for various preliminary activities. And here's a paragraph which goes to the very kind of misrepresentation that I said was going to happen when the city, in conjunction with the Omaha World-Herald and the big shots, tried to con the public into voting for a bond issue. I'm going to read a paragraph. Rick Ruggles is the person who wrote this article. State tax revenue would cover as much as \$75 million of the \$200 million convention center. Local taxes, fees, and money from other sources would cover the rest. Members of the Legislature, that is not true on its face. The only way anything will be kicked back to Omaha is if a certain amount of new tax money is generated by that facility and the events that take place there. They could...they should have said, there's a possibility that there will be \$75 million over this long period of time. But that is not even guaranteed if the new money is generated, because nothing can come out of that fund until the Legislature appropriates it. This paragraph is utterly and totally wrong, but it's the beginning shot in a misrepresentation intentionally engaged in to mislead the people of Omaha into thinking that their taxes will cover, out of \$200 million, \$125 million, and the state is going to pick up the other \$75 million. That's not true, and they know it. At first, I was feeling a little different about LB 382. But as I see the big guns, meaning the World-Herald, weighing in, my attitude is hardening again. I don't blame any of the people in this Legislature who are supporting that bill for the misrepresentations, but I had said repeatedly that the only reason that bill is wanted is so that they can mislead the people into thinking that they're guaranteed \$75 million in state assistance. Omaha right now could float a bond issue to build not only that convention center, but the arena also. They don't want to do that, because they cannot succeed. So they need that bill, which does not guarantee any money to Omaha. But they can argue. And the way that was done, not in an editorial, but in a supposed news story. And since it's written in a news story, most people are going to presume that the writer studied the situation and knew what he was talking about. We have not only bad editorials written by ignorant editorial writers...and I'm going to base it