

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

February 25, 2000 LB 1436A

people vote for bills which, if they could vote on the concept, they'd vote "no", but they vote for it because you're halfway down a slippery slope. We see it in the tax base. We'll make a loophole for a tax base, and the next year it will be the next best example that's right next to that one, and then we'll have to make that tax base change and revoke that taxable item. We had a bill in the Revenue Committee this last year on the taxing of magazines. And we don't tax newspapers, we don't tax magazines that are I think taxed...that are subscribed to monthly, but we do tax magazines that are like quarterly and every half year. And we had a magazine that came in and said, well, gosh, we should be treated like everybody else and of course that means we shouldn't have a tax. You know what, we used to tax things, but the Farm Bureau came in and said, we do ours on a monthly basis and we want a tax break. And guess what? We gave one. And now that slippery slope has begun and the person who has one for three months or six months can't make sense of our public policy anymore because we're down the slippery slope. What we do is we lose the precedence, we lose the bright lines. And once we lose the bright lines we then really reduce ourselves to political muscle. This is one of those bright lines. It will take us a long time to get there, but one day people will stand up on this floor and say, gosh, how did we start giving away that trust fund for all these other purposes and not keeping that amount of money for really big, what, public health, really big issues we couldn't reach any other way? And we'll all scratch our heads and wonder, how did that happen? And I rise to tell you that today is the first day of that process. Today is the very first pebble down that mountain. And we will forget about it; we will ignore it. We'll have a darn good reason for doing what we're doing on this bill, but it will start that same kind of process in which we lose the power to say no to a good deal because the precedent is gone, the precedent of protecting the tax...of the trust fund for the purposes for which it was originally designed rather than using it for a multiplicity of smaller floor-based approaches to health issues. And it's rare that we get a chance to see that first pebble that starts down the mountain, and today is that day and that A bill is the one.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Beutler.