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SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. Senator Landis makes a valid point about processes that are employed in the Revenue Committee to analyze various proposals that come to us. The committee does try to be cognizant that there are long range implications for many of the things that we recommend to you as a body, and that once we begin granting special treatment for some group, for some category of taxpayers in the state of Nebraska, or even if we should, gosh, forbid, begin taxing some special group in a new way, that it has implications for others, and that those implications, if we don't fully explore them or discover them at the time we're making a recommendation to you, will come home to haunt us. And they will come home to haunt us in ways that we will find to be unfavorable, and we certainly don't want to, as a committee, recommend to you positions that will come home to haunt you should you follow our advice. So it is something that the committee works at trying to understand and discover, that is what are the broader implications beyond the issue of whether someone or some group is asking for some different treatment than what they have had in the past. I've heard the comments with regard to Senator Bohlke's bill about it being some kind of a slippery slope. Senator Byars, I think, characterized it as a slippery slope that was covered with ice. I...if there is a slippery slope at all in Senator Bohlke's proposal, at least it is my current view that it isn't that kind of a slippery slope. What kind of a slippery slope are we actually talking about? Are we talking about a change in the fundamental purpose for which the smoking...the trust fund was created in the first place? We're told that it was created to address various health care concerns. Well, I've been led to understand by earlier debates that we had in the body that teen smoking is a health concern; that by reducing teen smoking we will reduce mortality; that we will reduce morbidity, that is reduced function in individuals due to emphysema or other diseases, maybe even some diseases that aren't life threatening. So, whatever the purposes of Senator Bohlke's bill, it seems to me that it is related to a health related or a health-care purpose. What I've heard is objections to the way in which we're directing the dollars. Now if there are objections to the purpose as being an