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FLOOR DEBATE

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federal money is not forthcoming, then we still have the mandate, then the state government doesn't have enough money to pay for all that, then the counties begin to share the costs of the federal money that doesn't come in. Our experience in the last 10 to 15 years I think would indicate that that's not all that fanciful an idea or a potential problem, especially when at the federal government, with everything that's going on with homeland security, which they have not yet paid for, by the way. I wish the Lieutenant Governor was subject to questioning. We might find out how much has come in on homeland security so far. Besides that, we all know that war looms with Iraq.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: That will be an enormous expense on the government, even if it's a quick war. The idea of war continues to depress the economy, among other factors. It's not altogether unlikely, in my estimation, given the reluctance of the federal government to do anything in the first place in this area, and the slowness to which they continue to react to a problem that is now two years old. I think that caution behooves us to move extremely slowly on this matter and, in fact, unless there is some significant penalty for doing nothing at all, my preference would be to do nothing at all until we have assurances, not only in the short term, of federal money, but assurances of long term...of the long-term money necessary to complete whatever succession of mandates is represented in the federal legislation.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Time has expired. Thank you, Senator Beutler. Further discussion? Seeing none, the Chair would recognize Senator Schimek to close.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. In discussing with the legal counsel to the committee regarding the expenditures possibly in counties, I need to probably embellish on that just a little bit. It is my understanding, from talking with her and recollection from the committee briefing and so forth, that all the counties now do have PCs. They all do have their voter registration on PC. But the problem with some of them is that they are not interactive. So in some of those