

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

February 27, 2003 LR 14

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Senator Jones, on the bill. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I have been historically opposed to the extension of gambling in any form. Voted against it in every way, shape, and measure, with the exception of the state lottery a number of years ago, when we were in roughly the same place. The demand of the public was to do something in the area. They wanted to vote, and they were putting really inferior proposals on the ballot. And luckily, in the case of the lottery, it was such an egregious proposal, with no real oversight, and it was like an invitation to say, the money is in some bags in the back of the place; it will be dark between 11:00 and 3:00; go back and pick up the money there, because we don't know where it's going to go after that point. I mean, it was an open invitation for money to disappear and fall out of the system to a whole lot of inappropriate locations. It was so bad that the public actually voted against a state lottery, even though they wanted one. And they let us know it. So we passed a state lottery out of here. It went to the public, and they endorsed it. It's the one time I've voted for it, because I saw that the public had exercised some judgment against a really, really bad proposal, even though they wanted it. And I couldn't guarantee that they'd do it a second time. And if we didn't get in front of the freight train, it was going to run over us. We're in that same situation now. Oddly enough, it's...by the way, I don't like it. Sixty-five percent want to vote for gaming, and only 30 percent want to go and game. Now, what do you explain the other 35 percent who don't want to gamble? It's because they want the 30 percent who do gamble to pay their taxes. This is volunteering somebody else to pay your taxes, and it's one of the reasons I really don't like gaming. However, we're in a situation where I think we're not going to be enabled to control what happens. And I fear the self-interest of those people who put the proposals on the ballots that we will vote for. So with trepidation, with reluctance, with an unsavory taste in my mouth, I will vote for limited gambling. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll vote for a casino in Omaha. That makes sense to me. I understand that. I'll do that. It's probably part of their convention center area, and becoming a destination town. I think they are losing