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FLOOR DEBATE

February 28, 2003 LR 11

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator McDonald. Senator Johnson on the committee amendments to LR 11CA.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Cudaback, members of the body, I don't know where, really, to start with this. People, I guess the thing that I wonder is this, is that we've been talking about all the small issues here and maybe going into the weekend it would be appropriate that we sit back...I was told to stand close to the microphone. At any rate, I think maybe going into the weekend it makes sense that we look at the big picture here, and as I see the big picture it comes down to three things. One is that we can just completely back away from this issue, and I think there would be people in this body that would think that they had done their duty because, quote, they're against gambling. I'm not so sure that this is the right way to go. We came awfully close to dodging the bullet last fall, and I think we came within a judge's decision of having a very bad issue on the ballot, and I'm afraid that it would have passed. This ballot was such that it left the Legislature without any authority, the state got none of the revenue, and indeed the casinos that we have been talking about here all morning were virtually banned in that amendment that was on the...almost on the ballot this last November. So I'm not sure that that's quite the right way to go. So then we come down to two other options. One is basically you have restricted gambling with a casino-type of where you go as a destination point, such as has been suggested at the west end of Dodge Street, close to the convention center; or you go to open gambling all over. I've talked to my friend, Senator Schrock, about the...oh, having the casinos in the racetracks. To me, first of all, I am not in favor of trying to rescue a business that is doing poorly in these times, and I think that's what we'd be doing. Let's support winners instead of ones that are trailing the field. But the more dangerous part of doing this, as I see it, is that we then open up casinos here and there, and I can tell if they were...was a casino at the racetrack in Grand Island, with the dedication to the convention industry that there is in my town of Kearney, Kearney would have to have one. And then, obviously, Senator Burling, they would want one in Hastings, et cetera. So I think we have to think in terms of this: Do we