

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

April 2, 2003

LR 11

think, on this. The amendment, very simply, would reduce the number of casinos that would be allowable, that the Legislature could authorize, from up to eight to up to four. So the maximum number that could be allowable would be four. My rationale for that is that just based on what I've heard, not only in my district, but from many of you on this floor, they think that eight is quite a few for a population base that we have if they're going to be viable. Secondly, that allows you to have, if you choose to do so, one in each congressional district. I also think that the 3rd District, the western part of the state, the distances are such that if it were such that there were a community that wanted...or, it made sense to have something close to the Colorado border, Colorado, Wyoming, whatever, that that would be...that would still allow, that, and would also allow one to be further east in the 3rd District. I feel better about that being a maximum number than I do eight. The Pederson amendment allows, not casinos, but some type of additional electronic gambling at racetracks. And if the community votes to have it, it would allow some electronic gambling also in connection with the local keno. If it's voted on by the people, they would have that opportunity. I signed onto the Pederson amendment, not necessarily because I support having that additional gambling at the casinos...or, at the keno places. But I think it is important to give the opportunity for the rest of Nebraska, should they, by a local vote, choose to do so, to have some benefit out of changing our constitution in this subject area. Now, the more important to me is this, that I believe, no matter how I feel about gambling, that as a senator I have a responsibility to try to impact policy making in this state so that we have a better chance of winding up with the best policy we can. I have read enough and heard enough and seen enough polls and observed what happened with what I consider to be an absolute conglomeration of a petition to know that if we abdicate our responsibility, we're going to have the opportunity to vote on something. I don't want that something to be a conglomeration that we as the elected representatives have no control over, input into the structure of, or control over the revenue, or division of revenue, or the proliferation of that activity. So that's my reason, totally, for even taking the time to be involved with this particular piece of legislation. I think that sometimes we have to separate...and