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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 759

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Redfield. Senator Jones.

SENATOR JONES: Call the question.

SPEAKER BROMM: Do I see five hands? I do. The question then is, shall debate cease? All in favor please vote aye, and opposed no. Please record.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 1 nay to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BROMM: Debate does cease. Senator Quandahl, you're recognized to close on your amendment.

SENATOR QUANDAHL: Thank you, Speaker Bromm. Thank you, members of the body, for the debate and for listening. This particular amendment that we have been discussing and kind of leading up to all day would do just a few fairly simple things. Fairly simple things that have a very big impact on the state of Nebraska. First, it would eliminate all statutory earmarks to cigarette taxes in the state of Nebraska. It would cause all tax revenues from cigarette taxes to go into the General Fund. It would maintain the current cigarette tax rate at \$64 (sic) a pack. There's been a lot of...64 cents. Yeah, \$64, I have heard some advocacy for that, but that isn't going to happen. Isn't going to happen. Senator Byars got up, and he made a point. He said, you know, just because of the way that this was...comes before the body, it's not fair. And that's something I think that we all need to think about when we're dealing with not only revenue items, but also the budget. Is it fair to cut aid to public schools? Is it fair to cut our university and higher education to the point that we're going to be forced to do? Is it fair to cut aid to poor people and old people? Is it fair? Is it fair? Is it fair? I, for one, think that it is fair to take the earmarks off of our cigarette tax revenue, place it back into the General Fund, so that we can reexamine our priorities that we have in the state of Nebraska. This amendment, painful as it may be, is the first step in a very painful process that we're going to have to get through in order to resolve our current budget crisis. I would urge the adoption of this amendment.