

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

April 23, 2003      LB 759

committee division, the first is on cigarette taxes.      The second will be the income, and the third the sales.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN:      Thank you, Senator Connealy.      Next amendment, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK:      Mr. President, the first morning for consider...the first amendment for consideration this morning is by Senator Thompson.      Senator Thompson would move to amend the first component of the committee amendments with FA1335.      (Legislative Journal page 1361.)

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN:      The Chair would recognize Senator Thompson to open on her amendment.

SENATOR THOMPSON:      Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body.      When we were discussing this yesterday, I think you heard the comment by one of the members of the Revenue Committee that, and I discussed this with the chair of the committee, and this is the bill that does contain the language that could be used to address the issue of increasing cigarette taxes.      And this will probably be our only chance if we don't suspend the rules or do something tricky in that regard that we would be able to bring an amendment that would be germane to talk about the issue of cigarette taxes, and that as a vehicle of solving some of our budgetary problems this year.      I put an amendment up for a quarter and it could have been a lot more, could have been a little less, but I think that's a reasonable amount to suggest for this particular purpose.      I think this is one of those areas that the public is solidly behind us on, and it's one of those policy decisions we can make that has two policy outcomes that we can achieve.      Those of you who have been here for the last six sessions with me have known that we've talked about the cigarette tax solely as a policy issue for discouraging smoking.      We know from research that the price is the most significant impact to teenage smokers.      And we know from research that it's significant in decreasing the number of pregnant women who smoke.      So for a long time this issue was discussed solely on its public health merits.      And this is research that was done by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and is the most effective way to reduce smoking.      So