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SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose Senator Thompson's amendment. It's great. She said 73 percent of the people don't want this...are in favor of this tax; the 73 percent that don't smoke. You know, I would be in favor of a tax that I don't have to pay. So that's...we talk in this body about helping small businesses. This would drive a stake into small businesses in the border cities, I think in all the cities, but the level of taxation. They say people are going to quit smoking. They don't quit smoking. They simply in our area,...we had figures that were shown in the Revenue Committee that they simply go across the state...go across to Iowa to buy the cigarettes. So they don't quit smoking. This is the wrong tax to do. We're hitting the poor people. People that smoke, that have a habit, it's an addiction. I've never smoked in my life but I think it's the wrong tax at the wrong time. And I simply rise to oppose it. Seventy-three percent said they're for the tax. Well, if you don't pay it, you're for the tax. So I simply say it's a bad idea. Our tax that we did last year I think is a reasonable tax. I think Iowa is coming up close and that's the state we have to...because most of us live within, you know, from here over to the Missouri River. So simply rise to oppose this tax. It's bad for small businesses in our state. It's bad for the poor people of our state, and it's a bad plan to be that far ahead. And, Senator Brashear, if you'd like the rest of my time. I'd like, Senator...Lieutenant Governor, to give the rest of my time to Senator Brashear.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Senator Brashear, you have three minutes.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Mr. President, thank you, members of the body. Senator Hartnett, thank you. If you've not had an opportunity to focus, and I think some have and others have been busy with other things, we truly are, in my judgment, it's only mine, at a strategic moment. And it's a strategic moment in what will be a very up close and personal process for all of us for the rest of this session. Notice is being given that it is the desire of the executive branch to adopt this amendment, which Senator Thompson is offering, and then to strip this bill, and that's called a hijacking, and go from there. As a coequal branch of government, I hope that we understand that in the