

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

April 29, 2003 LB 407, 759

we've been telling people for months that we had no money and we've been telling them we were \$680 million in the hole, and then we raised the figure to \$760 million, and the first things that leaped out to me, as I reviewed the Appropriations Committee work, I've counseled and been responsible for businesses that were liquidating and were going out of business, and the first thing that leaped out to me was that we're doing \$50 million worth of salary increases. And in the troubled situations with which I've dealt in my private life, I never did salary increases at a time that we were going broke and we were trying to deal with the issues. And then I noticed \$25 million worth of enhancements to what I call fringe benefits and I have many times had to renegotiate a benefits package so that it cost less, and everybody gave up something. They did not keep the same coverages and pay an increased premium. They gave up something in order to make it work. Now I believe, and I'll be doing some dialogue with Senator Wehrbein, if he's willing in the course of this discussion, but I believe Senator Wehrbein will tell me that the \$50 million worth of salary increases were negotiated and there's nothing we can do; and that the fringe benefits, mainly the insurance package, was negotiated and there's nothing we can do about a \$25 million increase there. And if that's his answer then we'll discuss that and examine it, but I'm trying to give you a forecast of where I'm going. If you turn to page 5 of the Appropriations Committee compilation of hard work, you will notice that we got to come up with...remember, I use round numbers; it's easier...we got to come up with \$360 million. So if LB 759, and I've shown that I'm not afraid to talk about revenue, if LB 759 will do \$160 million, then we're short \$200 million.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: That is not as alarming to me in how we get there as if you go to the out biennium, and the next time I speak I'll talk about the out biennium, because you know we can't always go session to session, year to year, biennium to biennium, and tell the people we didn't know. The roaring nineties are over. The roaring nineties were an aberration in the history of the state of Nebraska's economy. And there's a reason the Appropriations Committee publishes the projection for