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FLOOR DEBATE

April 29, 2003 LB 407, 540, 755, 759

that are on the table, maybe even Select File, and how that might affect property tax, whether it's LB 540, potential of affecting property tax, or the contents of LB 759 relating to the tax on labor with remodeling and so forth, and it's some of those real life experiences that I've seen over the last few years at home that are particularly eye opening. And if this issue puts us over into a special session, believe me, as the person who has to come the farthest of any member now that Senator Wickersham isn't in the body anymore, it's a real issue. And, Senator Chambers, during the interim, you can have the Capitol, but just realize that there's a little competition with LB 755 proposing a new agency to oversee the Capitol. And while I'm on that, I hope that we as a body can refrain from creating a new agency. Even as important as the Capitol is, I think it's not in the best interest of government efficiency to start a new agency. But as I'm out and about in the community here in Lincoln, when we're not in session I enjoy various activities outside the building, I talk to people. I talked to a music teacher, for example, at a middle school who loves his job, who probably, regardless of any budget issues, will probably have somewhat of a change in assignment and may not love his job as much anymore. Or the teachers that are simply out of a job, that's very troubling to me. It's happening in my own district, not just in the larger districts. But I look at the bigger picture and what I find really troubling is the many difficult decisions that not only we as senators are facing but varying administrators throughout all of state government and down to the front-line workers who are facing a heavier workload because of it. What I found very troubling is a threat or a proposal to raise tuition 25 percent that came from apparently the faculty senate at UNL so that pay raises could be maintained, or the threat of a vote of no confidence of the chancellor who's facing very difficult decisions. And over this last weekend, I encountered someone I went to grade school with and asked him what he was doing. He told me and his wife...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SMITH: ...his wife happened to be in the museum studies program, and I braced myself for a barrage of criticism. But rather, this husband of a museum studies participant said, you