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LB 407, 798

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. Senator Bromm, you're recognized to speak.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Schimek. And it wasn't until I heard the discussion that I...a light came on that this was something that I definitely had some questions about. And the way this kind of strikes me is that a very good cause, tobacco prevention, smoking prevention. But in the year 2000 we passed a bill, LB 1436, to deal with this, and we said that the Health and Human Services Committee, the Legislature shall make annual recommendations for appropriations from the fund, and set up a Tobacco Prevention and Control Cash Fund. And there were numerous items that...as has been mentioned, including mental health services, developmental disabled, public health, respite services, biomedical research, tobacco sales enforcement, prescription drug study, and services delivery study. Those...that terminated in January of this year. It seems to me that if this is something that is worthy of \$6 million, or \$3 million, that we ought to appropriate it, and it ought to stand on its own, along with all the other things that we're going to be faced to make decisions on here. The Cash Reserve Fund could become very, very, very precious to us during the next couple of years. I would really rather not transfer Cash Reserve money for something even as worthy as this. This is a laudable goal, a worthy project. Can we say the future of Nebraska rests on this? I don't know. Are other tobacco smoking prevention efforts also part of the reason why we're seeing a decline in use of tobacco and smoking? Is education just overall, the awareness, part of the reason? I suspect there are lots of reason why. I just don't feel like I want to support taking Cash Reserve money to fund this program. Now, as I understand the program, the money is still in LB 407, and this would be to put Cash Reserve money in instead of using general appropriations. And so if we don't do this, that means we're saying we're either going to use General Fund appropriations or find some other money. I don't know where that would be. Or that we'll have to not do it, or we'll do it at a smaller scale, or we'll take it...or we'll refine or change the purposes of the tobacco fund, tobacco settlement funds. So those are choices. But using Cash Reserve money doesn't seem to me to be a choice