

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

May 6, 2003

LB 283

SPEAKER BROMM: Senator Landis, you're recognized to open on AM1713.

SENATOR LANDIS: I'll withdraw that amendment at this time.

SPEAKER BROMM: It is withdrawn. Next amendment, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Senator Jensen would move to amend, AM1737.  
(Legislative Journal pages 1632-1636.)

SPEAKER BROMM: Senator Jensen, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I'm offering an amendment to LB 283 that raises the tax on alcoholic beverages and devotes approximately half of that money raised to treatment programs. The other half of the funds will go to the General Fund. In this amendment, if this amendment becomes law and consumption levels remain the same, the state will recognize around \$14 million in new revenues. Approximately half will go to treatment. The other half will go to the General Fund, according to the amendment. Earlier this year, Nebraska Voices for Children conducted a poll of 900 Nebraskans. They asked about a variety of proposals to solve the budget problem. They asked the participants if they supported different forms of tax increases. By far, by far the most popular and accepted increase was on alcohol...was in alcohol. Eighty-six percent of the people polled said they supported an increase in alcohol tax. One of the reasons there was such support for the tax increase on alcohol is because it is so low. If we compared the alcohol tax to the cigarette tax, we see that for each single cigarette there is approximately 3 cents tax, each can of beer there is a mere 2 cent; 3 cents for a cigarette, 2 cents for a beer. This tax proposal will add 1.6 cents to a can of beer, 1.6 cents. I might add is somebody going to go across the river for 1.6 cents for a can of beer, or a 6-pack of beer, are they going to go over there for approximately 10 cents? I don't believe so. The question you may have is why should we earmark some of this money to treatment? I'm going to read some statistics that give you a