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LB 407, 408

vote this morning. Thank you.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Next speaker is Senator Thompson, on the Bromm amendment, AM1881.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I'm going to support this compromise. But I do want to highlight two other things that are happening that might give you some other options, and in the long run may, I hope, help the situation. First is, on the next bill, LB 408, there will be an opportunity to look at the issue of the Highway Trust Fund. I have an amendment filed there. You can't do it on this bill. And I know there's some of you who would like to have this as an either/or thing. And...but you would be able to look at that. A 5 percent cut to the state projects only would give you enough to fund this section of education. But in the absence of that, we're going to have to look here. The education lobby, I think, has been very generous in being willing to come forward and trying to reach this compromise. And I appreciate that. But there will be another opportunity to look at revenue from the Highway Trust Fund. And it would be the state projects only. And let me give you my philosophy of that. When you eliminate vertically programs at the university, to put those back will be extremely difficult. When you look at eliminating teacher programs, putting those back is extremely difficult, because you lose the expertise, and you lose the structure that's there. I don't think it hurts to say, we're not going to do that much construction next year, and be able to sustain the education program. And as it was said earlier, that fund has fluctuated over the years anyway. And I think a 5 percent, or a 10 percent, depending upon where we end up here today, might be an option for you. The second thing I want to talk about is an interim study resolution that a number of us have been working on, and Senator Johnson mentioned yesterday. We need to look at how we are financing higher education in Nebraska. We can't continue to bleed higher ed down to nothing. And so we're going to have to look at structure, we're going to look at governance, we're going to have to look at a lot of other things, and how higher education links between the state colleges, the university, the community college system. We need to look at a whole lot of issues. And I will be working with