

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

May 14, 2003

LB 407

great ideas and I like them, they're pointing the right way...but why they don't wind up creating public policy. Because public policy is a negotiation between powerful forces. It's a negotiation between powerful forces. Now, earlier today, I had a conversation with Barry Kennedy. Barry Kennedy said, look, we're not going to take the lead in this thing, but we might be able to live with \$300 million. But we...you can trust us, we're going to fight an income tax, and if you are going to do repair labor, I sure don't see why the commercial vehicles should be taxed and not the farm vehicles. Okay? That's a powerful force who's ready to negotiate with somebody who will talk to him. Now, who should have that conversation? It seems to me the Farm Bureau should. Seems to me other elements should. They could have a conversation about that, and we would get some feel for what large, powerful entities, speaking on behalf of thousands of Nebraskans, could and would live with. The problem is, we create for ourselves a Solomon trap. We're going to all sit down in a room, and then we're going to listen to everybody. Then we're going to make a plan, and when we announce the plan, everybody will be pleased with the plan. And that doesn't work. Because the plan we announce is different than the individual pieces of advice we got from everybody who gave us advice. Our plan doesn't look like what they told us to do. And you know what we then do? We then defend the announced plan from the attacks from people who tell us, you know, that's not what we told you. The essence of public policy is in negotiation. I can live with "X" if you can live with "Y." I can do this if you can do that. I can swallow this if we do that. I'll do a little bit more on revenue, but I'm not going to spend it for this over here. We are all struggling with it right now. But that's how we're doing business. The difficulty of task forces is that they use surrogates. Those surrogates give us information, but they don't bind or commit the important, powerful elements of Nebraska to a plan. They scope a plan, but they don't bind with commitment. The best ways in which we do business in that kind of a setting is where you get the parties together, we convene it, we monitor it, we goad them, and then we try to get them to make deals. Which, for example, is what the...say, the Workers' Compensation Task Force of eight or ten years ago, where labor and management said, look, I'll take some things and I'll give up others if I get