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LB 408

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well, I'd rather not go there, Senator Schrock, because...

SENATOR SCHROCK: Well, you've...we've got to make choices here. I mean, which one is more important?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: The one answer to that is, the gas tax is paid for that purpose. And so it's...in that sense, it's mostly self-funding. We don't have that luxury, if you will, in higher education. It's an attempt to balance that. And I guess that's perfectly...it's a subjective subject. It's difficult to be objective. But I think most of us feel that good roads are important, if nothing else, to get to college. (Laugh)

SENATOR SCHROCK: Well, you add a little levity to it there. And we need a little levity. But I don't see the justification here. And I don't...I would never vote to take a lot of money from the Department of Roads. And I would never vote to do it permanent. But these are extraordinary times. And I just kind of wonder, where's the equity here? You know, I could make the same argument for Game and Parks. It is our...they do take care of our number-one tourist attraction. The Game and Parks facilities are our number-one tourist attractions. And if we don't maintain them and take good care of them, tourists won't come to Nebraska. They don't come very often anyway. But when they do come, they won't come back if we don't take care of them. And so, you know, I can make an argument there. You can make an argument there's probably nothing more important than our environment. And yet we cut to the Department of Environmental Quality. And what's more important than our water resources? Yet we make cuts there. So I'm listening. But I don't see the justification of not having Department of Roads help out a little bit in this problem. And you know, maybe they can mow the roadside ditch one time less.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Who knows what the answer is. But in my book, higher education is just as important as the Highway Trust Fund and Department of Roads. And so, I made my pitch earlier and