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LB 283, 407, 759

did want to speak to this bill. I'm going to have to vote red on this bill. But I don't want this bill to pass without having gone on record in expressing my appreciation to the nine members of our Appropriations Committee who have worked so hard this year. This has been an extraordinarily difficult year. And I...you know, I served on Appropriations for two years, so I think I have a pretty good feel for the kind of anguish and difficulties with which the Appropriations Committee had to contend with this year. This session I moved over to the Judiciary Committee, and the Banking and Insurance Committee. And each day as our committee hearings would conclude, I'd go back to my office, get caught up on e-mail, get caught up on correspondence and phone calls and so forth, and then start to head toward the exits. And as I did so, I'd walk by the Appropriations Committee hearing room, and they were all still at it, hour after hour after hour, going through that state budget line by line, and finding lots of cuts. No one can walk away from this session and say that our Appropriations Committee didn't bring forth millions and tens of millions of cuts, very painful cuts. And I think they've done an extraordinary job of prioritizing the needs of our state government. The difficulty I have and the reason I'm going to vote red is because I can't vote right now for a third of a billion dollars in new taxes on the people of Nebraska, who are already hurting. I can't vote for LB 759. I can vote for a tax package. I could vote to extend LB 1085 from last year. I could vote for LB 283 this year, the alcohol tax, and all the amendments that Senator Chambers and Senator Kruse would want to add to it. I could vote for all those taxes. But I can't vote for LB 759. It's too rich for my blood. It's too heavy a burden on the taxpayers of Nebraska. And if I'm not willing to vote for that tax package, then it seems to me, as matter of honesty and integrity, I shouldn't be voting for that spending package. Those two votes ought to be consistent. So again, I want to express my appreciation to the Appropriations Committee. They have done a fabulous job for the people of Nebraska and for this Legislature. And I just want to thank them for their work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Foley. Senator Schimek.