

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

May 21, 2003

LB 608

We have a Department of Revenue that is steeped in traditions, process, procedure and law that deals with the confidentiality of any taxpayer's tax return. And at the point where we want to move from having the executive branch of government and the employees of the executive branch of government who were responsible to the people through the Governor but not responsible to the people directly, we want to make available individual taxpayer specific information to the...another second branch of government, the legislative branch of government, in which all of the operative players, as far as I'm concerned, are directly responsible to the people, and we want all of the laws that apply to us to then be the law under which, including open records and a lot of other things, under which we will transfer this data from the executive branch to the legislative branch, I must stand and oppose it. I haven't even heard the compelling case for why our Program Evaluation Committee needs it. You will recall on General File, which was a long time ago in this session, when this bill appeared, we talked about all of the...people love to pretend like there is no data and there is no information with regard to LB 775 or any other economic development incentive programs. And, of course, we went on at great length, greater than some would have liked to have had us gone on, about the pages and pages and pages of data that is required. And notwithstanding how the amendment might be changed as Senator Beutler has represented it, if you look at the amendment now, it says, and all supplemental or supporting data for applications. We are walking into this area on this late day in the session without regard to the fact that we've signed a contract with all of these people that this will be confidential, without regard to the fact that we have, I hope, process and procedure with regard to tax return that is and always has been confidential, that we would not want the Legislature or at least some of us would not want the Legislature to be accused or to be in a position of being accused of wanting taxpayer specific data for our own particular purposes. We did not...we would not want to politicize it. We've all here lived long enough to have heard the uproar about executive branch of government, particularly at the federal level,...

SENATOR ENGEL: One minute.