

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

May 27, 2003

LB 572

earmarking funds. This, though, requires a tax increase before you can earmark them, another three cents per pack. If it was up to me, I would do away with all the tobacco tax earmarks. They've built the coliseum up here, the Devaney Center, they've built this, who knows what else they've supported over the years. We've piled these things onto the smokers. It's time we stop. It's not that I'm against a tobacco cessation program. If it's that important they can come back and find funding out of another method other than piling on another 3 cents onto the tobacco users. I've never smoked; don't intend to start. This doesn't affect me personally at all. I have heard from some former smokers that said they had addressed this issue, the smoking cessation program, and considered it a bit of a joke. It was press this button if you want to do this or that, and I'm not sure what all the procedure was, but I heard from a couple people that I know well and they have quit smoking. They both made the comment, you're going to have to want to do it yourself, and if you want to do it yourself you can quit without help. Maybe they're more strong willed than some of the other people that are currently smokers. But also in Revenue Committee, we've had testimony from I think two tobacco distributors, border, based in Nebraska, that showed us or told us about their tobacco sales and the redistribution of their product after we increased the tax last time. They were into Iowa. Now their volume stayed basically the same, but their destination, their distribution, was different. Their volume was simply shifted into Iowa and not delivered into Nebraska. So you've got to believe that these people, they didn't make a big issue of the tax. They just said we're going to continue to sell more of these tobacco products outstate the higher we raise our taxes in Nebraska. So I also, as I said, rise in opposition to the amendment. I think it's time we stop earmarking funds, in this case a new tax and earmarking it on top of that, so I would hope that we could vote red on the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Baker. Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I oppose the Thompson amendment as well. This has been discussed before, but this...sort of a curious arrangement that brought about the program that is in place now. Back when...and Senator Bourne