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LB 285A

SENATOR JENSEN: Well, this was all part of LB 1436, which was passed when Senator Bohlke was here, about four years ago, and that funding now is running out. And all this will do is keep those people on staff until we can find another way to fund this out of the tobacco settlement funds for next year.

SENATOR HARTNETT: New people in the Legislature, why it is difficult to kill programs or stop programs--they get a constituency out there. You know, we never cut things down. Senator Jensen wants to respond to me. (Laugh)

SENATOR JENSEN: Well, if I could just reply. Think, just think for a minute, you sit on the Revenue Committee, think of the dollars that we would be expending on mental health, public health, and all of the areas that we are funding through the tobacco settlement dollars; \$50 million a year that would be coming out of the General Fund. And not only, on top of that, we would have a mental health system that would be in shambles if we hadn't funded almost \$18 million a year out of that. Those are dollars that are not coming out of the General Fund.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Yeah, my...

SENATOR JENSEN: So to take this little bit, this very small bit out of the General Fund is a pittance compared to what we're doing.

SENATOR HARTNETT: But you say that they go to talk at schools and so forth, and is there any proof, you know, that kids have quit smoking? You say that there is, you know. I have not seen a study, you know, of it, Senator Jensen or Senator Byars. Senator Thompson is not here. You know, it's just...you know, I can say, yes, I felt good after I listened to you talk Senator Jensen, or myself, but I just have some problems, and like Senator Baker said, maybe we don't need the money. Maybe they have money right now, but that's...I'm going to quit.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Hartnett. Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Question.