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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR AGUILAR: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I hadn't planned on participating in this exercise in futility, but after some of the previous comments on the floor, I felt it was almost my responsibility to get up and say something. Some of the comments that have inspired me, so to speak, are in relation to failed racetracks in this state. And, yes, there are some failed racetracks, and the reason some of these tracks fail is simply because the community didn't choose to support them well enough. I must point out that is not the case in the city of Grand Island, not at all. Fonner Park has been ponying horses up to the starting gate for 51 years now. And in those 51 years, they have been the greatest community partner our city has ever seen. Their contributions to our community are renowned. In that time, over \$3 million in cash contributions. And the different organizations that they have supported and allowed to use that facility on a year-round basis include the Humane Society, Crime Stoppers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Family Violence Coalition, the water park, new soccer and softball fields, the Red Cross, the Grand Island emergency EMT and fire department training. They give over \$207,000 in scholarships to area high school students, half a million a year...half a million people a year use this facility for community groups and the county fair to 4-H exhibits. Right now, Fonner Park is planning a \$10 million contribution to the Heartland Events Center. How many communities that used to have tracks wish they had them back and had a contributor to their community that this is? I don't think you'll find very many people in Grand Island bad-mouth our track, because like I said, it is a community partner, one we're very, very proud of. So it's a little upsetting to me when I hear people bad-mouth the racetracks. This is one that does not deserve bad-mouthing. I would yield the rest of my time to Senator Schimek. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Schimek, you have about two and a half minutes.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you very much, Mr. President, and Senator Aguilar. Thank you. One of the reasons that I'm going to take advantage of this time is that nobody is talking yet about those four petitions that are out there. And I don't know