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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CUDABACK: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now go to...continue discussion on the Smith amendment, AM2599, to LR 14CA. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President and members. Again, I rise in support of AM2599. It's the amendment that says that a casino would be subject to the approval of the registered voters of the county voting on the question of whether such county location...or casino location shall be in such county. I came across an article, or actually several more. I am being given more information along the way here. But I just started to read this article from the American Legion Magazine that says "Gambling's Dark Side." And I realize that not everyone might think there's a dark side to gambling, but I would say that the American Legion has probably studied the issue more than most of us in here. But I also came across a report that says the taxable retail sales numbers from 1996 to the year 2000 for Iowa's 11 nonsuburban, mid-sized cities, the four cities with casinos ranked dead last in annual retail sales growth, lagging far behind their casino-free counterparts. That's why I believe that a local county, the local folks who are subjected to the ills of casino gambling, should have the right to keep a casino out of their area, therefore, protecting their retail environment, and research, after research, after research shows the same thing. Now, we'll see the glittery, glitzy dollar signs flying by from those folks who will profit the most from casino gambling tell us that, oh, look what this will do for the coffers. And again, I go back to pointing out the fact that people voted for the lottery, in my opinion, those who voted for the lottery in the early nineties did so thinking it was going to keep their taxes down, and I don't think too many Nebraskans would say that they've felt some tax relief over the last ten years, and especially due to the lottery. We've heard about several issues coming up. Some folks yesterday started talking about the low-level nuclear waste issue and the court action, and there are varying opinions on that. There are varying opinions on how it should be paid. We're going to have to levy a tax to pay for the \$151 million that the courts have said that we owe, courts to this point anyway, and it reminds me back to the 1990 election year when we had someone campaigning for