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FLOOR DEBATE

February 20, 2004 LR 14

followed by Senators Kremer, Kruse, and Smith. Senator Erdman.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, I'm going to rise in support of Senator Smith's amendment, AM2599. I think he made some pretty valid points and I think he also presented some comfort, hopefully, for those individuals that are seeing what's happening in the Omaha area and hope that that doesn't happen elsewhere in the state. Before I speak, I was...mentioned yesterday the idea of the Betterment of Nebraska Fund, and evidently there are people out there listening. I've received multiple e-mails in favor of the idea, and I've shared this with Senator Schimek. I'll share this one with you. Says: I just returned from the bank, after setting up an account regarding your suggestions. Monies have been set aside and when you reduce your idea to an amendment to LR 14CA and it passes, I will have it electronically transferred to the "whatever" fund. I want to be the first to contribute. I do not plan on going to a casino to lose my money and figure spending money I would lose to your fund would save me travel time, gas money, whatever tax I would have to pay for the privilege of losing. So that's an idea, but I'm not sure we'll get there. I also wanted to point out to the body that it seems that what we are doing here is contradictory to what everybody else in the United States is doing, and the recent example came on Wednesday. In Wisconsin on Wednesday, there was a victory for those who were in opposition to expanding the casinos and, in fact, it wasn't even close. The referendum on expanding gambling on Madison's southeast side failed with more than 64 percent of the people voting against it: 93,530 voters in a high-turnout election. So 64 percent of the people in Wisconsin said, no thank you, specifically in the Madison area. And why is that important? Is it important because they won? Yeah. But it's also important because you need to recognize how this was set up. Even by admission, those individuals who were opposing this would claim that they weren't as successful and organized and they would have liked to be. It was the most expensive political campaign in Dane County history, with the Ho-Chunks spending at least \$1.3 million. As of two weeks ago, which would have been the beginning of February, the tribe was outspending the No Dane Casino, which was the group opposing this, by a ratio of 40 to 1, 40 to 1. One of the members of the