

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

March 4, 2004

LR 209

of the gravity of the financial problems this state faces. We are broke. We are deep, deep in trouble financially, and we've got to start facing up to that. And before we put \$2 million into an institution that is suffering from declining attendance year after year after year, we better take a deep breath and take a look at some of the cuts that are going to be coming forward. I'm an alumni of the Appropriations Committee. And I'll tell you, I don't envy the members of that committee and what they're going to be going through the next few days. It's going to be torture. Some of the things that they're going to have to look at cutting, it's going to be absolute torture. I was on that committee when we had a little bit of money to spend, and it was easy. But things started going south, and now we're in deep trouble. I don't know how they're going to propose to get us out of this mess. But I'm troubled by the notion of putting a constitutional lock on \$2 million for a one line item, when so many other things are being sacrificed, and I don't think that's the way we ought to proceed. If this is a good idea, then what the sponsors ought to do is come forward and offer an amendment to the appropriations bill next week or shortly thereafter; bring an amendment that calls for \$2 million, and let that amendment compete against everything else in the state budget. That's the way we ought to handle this. The Appropriations Committee and all of us at large ought to be weighing expenditures for the State Fair along with every other line item on the budget. I don't think the State Fair deserves a constitutional lock on \$2 million. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Foley. Senator Janssen, on the bracket motion.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska, members of the Legislature. You know, from what I'm hearing here on the floor, I believe if this was put on the ballot, by the tone of what I hear, I doubt very much whether it would pass. But how do we know that, you know, whether it would pass or not? You know, that's a question that the public would have to answer. With the declining attendance at the State Fair, we're grasping at every avenue we can to make sure that we maintain a State Fair that I think, over the years, Nebraska has been pretty proud of.