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Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 8, 2004

LR 14

SPEAKER BROMM: Debate does not cease. We're back to discussion of the motion to substitute. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the body's willingness to discuss this issue. I believe it's important. And we will certainly take up the motion to substitute first. And I will also thank Senator Janssen for handing out some materials that I believe support my position that casinos are bad for Nebraska, in fact, support my position that the voters are likely to decline the advent of casinos in Nebraska. If you'll look at the poll that was handed out--and I guess I'll begin by saying that I don't believe that it's wise to legislate by polls, but they can provide some useful information. It speaks volumes, when you look at all the numbers here. And it talks about 91 percent of Nebraskans believe that the right to vote whether to allow casino gambling in the state or not. They want to vote. Well, when you say, do they favor it, it goes from 91 to 51. Now, that's without a lot of persuasive publicity on either side of the issue. And all we need to do is talk to South Dakota, for example, that has the casinos on nearly every street corner across the state. They've tried to repeal that. They've become addicted to some of the dollars that come directly there. But that's not in account for the cost associated across South Dakota. But look at the numbers here, and certainly they suggest that far fewer Nebraskans want casinos than those who want to vote on it. So we can presume that those who want to vote are going to say no. Let's save the cost of putting that one on the ballot, because there will be several others that we're going to incur the cost of merely putting it on the ballot. Now, you've probably seen handouts relating to keno, the keno casino coalition proposal, LaVista Casino proposal, veterans proposal, among others. And some of them have legislative prerogative, some don't. Some gives money to some organizations that it doesn't give to others. But it boils down to the issue that I believe some folks in the body want to put LR 14CA on the ballot to try to keep some of these off the ballot. Well, I believe that when you get into the greed that's associated with these petition initiatives, we're not going to keep it off the ballot, regardless of what we do, because it doesn't give money to those special interest groups