

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

March 8, 2004

LR 14

whatever you can work out, eight, five, two, I'm okay with that. My commitment is to let Nebraska voters have a say in November, and we place a legislatively regulated, conservative casino constitutional amendment on the ballot. LR 14CA does that. Now Senator Smith is vigorously and I think quite...he's done quite a nice job of opposing this measure. And I heard him say several minutes ago that he believes that the petition initiative that's out there, the broad-based petition initiative, will in fact get enough signatures to be placed on the November ballot. And I understand, it's a broad-based initiative, much broader than LR 14CA, where we're limiting it strictly to casinos. And I have to assume as well that Senator Smith believes the voters are going to do the right thing with that petition initiative, that they'll realize that it's too broad-based, brings slot machines throughout Nebraska, and as well as bringing casinos and those kind of things. Without LR 14CA, in my mind, voters don't have a choice. There is no plan B. You've got one way, one...the plan is broad-based gambling or no gambling. And I'm not in a position where I think broad-based gambling is in the best interests of Nebraskans. LR 14CA is plan B. It's reasonable, it's conservative, it's limited, and we control what's going on; the outside gambling interests do not. I would question the number of...the compromise that Senator Schimek has come up with, from eight to two. And I concur with Senator Loudon, I'm not sure that that's the right number. But again, I said I'd support however many there were. My concern is that other gambling interests aren't represented in this process. And I know Senator Schimek is working very hard, so I'll let her go. But primarily, the horsemen aren't included in this, nor are those in the lottery or keno or pickle cards. And I might just focus on the horsemen. We're talking five different venues in Nebraska: Columbus, Lincoln, Horsemen's Park, Atokad, and Columbus. Without them sharing in this, I'm not sure what alternative they have. They've been around for 60 years. It makes some sense that we have additional options for them, and two casinos, frankly, doesn't do that. And I...it will be interesting to watch what goes on here, but I think it's important that we also consider other gambling interests that have a longstanding history, in particular the horsemen. So with that, in an inclusive closing, I'm going to support