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FLOOR DEBATE

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started as teenagers. And I hope you'll take a moment. I'm paraphrasing from the piece that Senator Jensen passed out, the brief summary of the progress achieved by the Tobacco Free Nebraska program. And I hope you'll take some time to look at this. It's factual. It talks about the need for these dollars, the need for us to continue to have an active tobacco prevention program. And as you look at the statistics, the empirical evidence of what's happening to our youth smoking rate, I think it tells the story of why we need the dollars. And I just believe Senator Raikes completely, in that he's in favor of expending these dollars. He just has a feeling that they ought to be tied in more closely with the other LB 692 dollars. Well, I'll tell you, part of it, when you ask the question of why we shouldn't, Senator Raikes, I think those of us who worked, helped build that program, we live with a lot of fear when we start getting into LB 692, because that's a big pot of money. And we've had other people who have said, well, gee whiz, we can use it for building a bridge here or the State Fair there or doing this. And we're afraid. Those of us who are advocates are afraid. We don't want to do anything to jeopardize that \$50 million that we've had allocated. We've struggled as our investment income has gone down over these past several years, since 2001, since this was...LB 692 was passed, because our \$50 million at that point we thought maybe was conservative and we could edge it up a little bit, maybe even as high as 60. And maybe that's possible as we look down the road, and I wouldn't slam the door on that. But at this point, to make sure that we have a pot of money at the end of the rainbow, if you will, we need to be careful how we allocate it. I'd at least like...the reason that we're getting the dollars in the first place are because of the tobacco suit. I can't think of one better way, better reason for us to expend these dollars than for smoking cessation projects. And I can go on with a lot of detail. You all have the information in front of you. You can all peruse this and see in accuracy...

SPEAKER BROMM: One minute.

SENATOR BYARS: ...exactly what we're doing. And I would ask you at this point, move AM2983, the Jensen amendment, forward. It's, I think, a well-meaning, a good piece of legislation, and