

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

March 22, 2004 LB 1093

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Brashear, followed by Senator Baker.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. There are some things we could stipulate, I respectfully submit. We can stipulate that we are in a dilemma. We can stipulate that none of us wants to raise taxes. We can stipulate that we want to stand tall and do the right thing. But there will come a point in time, I think, if we play it right where we will actually have to do it, not just talk about it. I'm going to oppose the pending Wehrbein amendment. And as I've explained to Senator Wehrbein, it's with absolutely no disrespect for the hard work which he and the members of the Appropriations Committee have offered us. But I'm going to go contrary to that legislative principle of always make the bill better, I want to make the situation worse. The \$1.10 is in the Wehrbein amendment; the \$1.05 is in the Education amendment. We ought to stay with the \$1.05 and we ought to solve the enormous, and as I always say deal in round numbers, \$300 million problem that will result if we don't adopt the Wehrbein amendment. We ought not punt to the local school boards. We ought not return property taxes to 1997 levels. As our agricultural colleagues have been telling us, valuations have been going up. It was in the paper so there's more revenue coming off of real estate than ever before. We ought not turn back the clock to pre-1997. I know that if the situation gets worse then our senior member, Senator Chambers, will continue to pursue his desire for an income tax increase. And I would stand opposed to that unless we're going to tax the people who are now not paying competitively at the low end the income tax that they ought to be paying compared to the jurisdictions that surround us. So that will create a nice moment of tension. But you know there is something we can do if we want to, if we will. For eight-tenths of one cent per gallon of tax on gasoline, eight-tenths of one cent per gallon of gas on gasoline, which would put a tax on all those tourists and travelers who come across our state, our third largest industry because people have to travel Nebraska, for eight-tenths of one cent per gallon of gasoline, we can do \$270 million worth of bonds allowed by the Constitution of the state of Nebraska, approved by our residents, and we can retire those bonds over 30 years. And we