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FLOOR DEBATE

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particularly on Transportation Committee, but overall as a Senator, representing my district and the good of the state. What we're talking about here--and I hear Senator Brashear loud and clear--is that we're going to take money out of the Highway Trust Fund, a cash funded fund from users, people buying fuel--if you don't travel, don't buy fuel, you don't pay into it--and take this money that's being put into the Highway Trust Fund by users, and we're going to say...we're going to take the cash out of it, put it in the General Fund, we're going to borrow--we're borrowing money here, folks, to run government--and then we're going to replace that money we take out of the Highway Trust Fund with bonds. There's a down side to that, folks. You got to pay the bonds back. And what if we have another catastrophe, something...you know, the stock market goes south again? Who knows? In four or five years, we can't pay for the bonds. Then where are we? I'm one of these guys that, state government at least, we're going to pay as we go, if I have anything to say about it. I don't care...Highway Trust Funds are very important to us all. I understand that. But just...we're talking about a change in policy. Whether we take money out of the Highway Trust Fund or another cash fund, we have to pay it back, folks. And I don't think that's the way I want to be involved or implicated in it as a state senator, saying, yep, got two years to serve here, and decide we're going to change policy to where we're not going to operate anymore on what we can generate in revenue; we're going to borrow against our future by selling bonds. I don't buy that. I'm not going to do that. I won't vote for that. That's a policy change, regardless what fund we take it out of. It's handy, because there's a lot of money generated by fuel taxes. I also have to point out that that Highway Trust Fund is highly cyclical. You know, in the spring when they've accumulated the funds from the fuel tax, there's a lot of money there, but that money is obligated. Those contracts have been signed last summer for the projects...last summer, last fall, for these projects that are starting now. That money is obligated. You could see the Highway Trust Fund be down, I think, as low as a few million dollars come fall. So that's a policy decision Senator Brashear is asking us to make, to go away from pay as you go, to let's take the money, the cash, replace it with bonds, and let somebody down the road--term limits, there's none of us going to