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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. First of all, I would like to rise in support of Senator Wehrbein's amendment. But I want to discuss a little bit about, as far as county fairs, attendance at county fairs, and how the premium money comes for the county fairs. And that is in reference to Senator Raikes' questions that he had as far as the ability of the counties to budget for the fairs. The ag societies can budget to the county board for a fair, for premiums, and also for upkeep and maintenance of the ag society grounds. Their budget has to come under the 15 mills that is allowed. And that...what has to go in that 15 mills is the ag society, the fire departments, any type of library service that is utilized in the county. Those have to fit under the 15 mills. A county generally budgets...ag society generally budgets X amount of dollars for the fair, and X amount of dollars for maintenance and upkeep and new construction at the ag society. In Platte County, those dollars amount to around \$260,000 a year, total, of which 40-some thousand goes to the fair for premiums and the running of the fair, paying superintendents, paying...I mean, not superintendents, but judges and maintenance people of the fair. The thing that concerns me is counties are responsible for their county fair. And I think what we're discussing right now is a State Fair, a State Fair, where people that win on county level, not just livestock, but in very, very many other projects, and they do go to the State Fair, it's a state contest. I think we as representatives of the state, the 49 of us, are responsible for the State Fair, because it is a State Fair, and that's the thing that concerns me. To me, it's not a Lincoln fair, it's not a county fair. They have their own county fair, every county, or the majority of them, have their own county fairs. I think we need to keep in mind that, you know, it is a State Fair. We're responsible for it. If we do not have the money or do not want to support it, you know, then that has to be the route to be taken. But I think if the State Fair is going to survive, we have to have some money, you know, provided for, you know, premiums, for ribbons, you know, so we can continue to get participants on the state level. For several years...and last year they did not get anything. I think if this would continue for several years, the attendance, or at least the number of