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LR 209

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Legislature, I was saying this morning that I actually...this is an actual dream that I had. We moved the State Fair to Columbus, Ohio, (laughter) and they asked me, well, was it successful? And I think I woke up in a cold sweat. I don't remember. I was reading last night, and I've been reading it a lot lately, I've been reading The Art of War by Sun Tzu, and I think Ernie Chambers brings that out in me. I don't know that I've learned anything and after I...Senator Ernie Chambers, by the way, I'm sorry, for the record. I don't know that I've learned anything because what I'm about to say would fly in the face of just about everything I think that that ancient Chinese philosopher warrior would speak to. Part of his stance and part of the way that The Art of War is established is taking advantage of other people's emotions, driving them to the point where they...where their emotions and their passion are so out of whack that you can just squash them at that point if combat and if something of that nature is necessary. LR 209CA I guess, to a very small degree, would be an emotional issue with me. I don't see any real major logical reason we would do this except for this--it's an institution nearly as old as the state itself. Now we can...we can look at this and say, it's the citizens' fair. In some ways I would submit to you that it is, to a degree, the citizens', or could be, a citizens' decision here. That's where we're going with this. That's where Senator Landis I believe wants to go with this. Now consider the current status of our electorate in the state of Nebraska. I think when I was elected we had a 17 percent voter turnout rate in my district. Anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of the people, the registered voters, actually go out and vote. Now I would also submit to you that part of that apathy goes to the fact that we, as elected officials, do not...are probably not populist enough, that we look at the people and say, hey, it doesn't matter, a gambling issue, an issue that we think the citizens can actually grab, understand and move to a conclusion on their own with the help of our leadership, that's the only way in a lot of instances that that type of stuff is going to be done. So let's say 200,000 people wanted to vote on expanded gambling. Just because nobody has spoken up and said they wanted to vote on this type of institution means that we can't show the leadership to actually give them something to vote on? I'm not sure I