

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

April 7, 2004            LR 11

tell you why I pushed my light. I pushed my light in response to the birthday boy, Senator Erdman. He asked a couple of legitimate questions. He said, why aren't the Omaha senators saying much about this. Their area is the one most likely to be impacted by this proposal. We're not hearing much from them. And he also said, if we believe in representative government, what are we doing here passing off a tough one onto the people? We ought to keep it ourselves and resolve it here. We are a representative body here. We also have a vigorous tradition in this state of populace action, initiatives, referendums, petitions, and that's what we've got percolating right now, and Senator Wehrbein made reference to that a few minutes ago. And at least for me, that's why I've been voting yes thus far on these various gambling proposals. Jeff Koterba, the cartoonist for the World-Herald drew a cartoon, I don't know, a month or a month and a half ago and it was funny. I was one of the people indirectly nailed by it but he drew a chicken. It was Chicken Little running around, and there were petitions falling from the sky, and the chicken is labeled "Nebraska Legislature" and it's running around saying, the sky is falling. And it's a funny cartoon. It's a fair shot, but I say I guess he's nailed me because I am concerned. I am worried that our other house, as people like to call it, the people out there acting through the petition process are...I think have a likely chance of succeeding. Now I know there are some people on the other side of this that say, no, those petitions aren't going to make it. Even if a petition does break through and get on the ballot, it's not going to pass. I wish I was that certain. If I was I wouldn't mess around. I'd vote no on all of this. I'm not that certain and I could be reading the public wrong, but I think the public wants some form of expanded gambling as strongly as the public wanted term limits. And I realize I think at least one of those petitions puts the ball back in our court, so maybe that one would be all right, but I don't think the public is in a mood to distinguish between this petition or that petition. Somebody puts something before them for expanding gambling; yes, I think people are going to sign off on it and I think they'll mark it off on the ballot. It's become an us versus them; the people versus the politicians, the judges, the system. They wouldn't let us have our term limits. We kept fighting for it. So, by golly, we got it. And I sense that same attitude out