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FLOOR DEBATE

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that we have with gambling, the horsemen have been involved with it since the 1930s. And I do consider it unfortunate that with this...putting this...what I think is kind of silly, putting a number in our constitution with regard to the number of casinos we have, we may be, in essence, turning our backs on an industry that has been involved in gambling since the 1930s. Senator Aguilar very eloquently spoke to Grand Island and how the track there is well-received by the community, and how they have grand community outreach. You know, we got to be cognizant of those that are currently engaged in the industry. There's been a lot of talk about Wal-Mart this afternoon, Senator Cunningham. You know, I liken it to that. We will have a Las Vegas-based, or Nevada-based casino coming in, and possibly shutting the doors on a Nebraska-based industry, Nebraska-based growth opportunity, particularly in agriculture. It's kind of the same way. The arguments against Wal-Mart coming into a community is that it will shut down existing businesses. Well, folks, what are we doing here? If we lock out the horsemen, I think it's a very good analogy, I think it's extremely good analogy that we'll be shutting out an industry that's been engaged in the state of Nebraska for decades, for decades. And I have strong concerns about that. And I...you know, Senator Aguilar's points are well-taken, with regard to the agricultural base significance of this industry. I agree with Senator Aguilar that I question the motivation of some of the members to turn their backs on the thoroughbred industry, particularly when you examine the fact that it is indeed an agricultural-based industry, and that we may be bringing in a Nevada-based casino, with this limited number as the amendment now stands, as LR 11CA stands, and shutting out a Nebraska-based group, our Nebraska horsemen, who are agricultural-based. It just doesn't make sense to me. And...but Senator Aguilar's eloquent open was...opening was well-taken. I think it makes tremendous sense. I think we have to examine what we're doing here, in terms of our...of people that have been engaged in the industry for the amount of time as the horsemen have been. I want to thank Senator Aguilar for bringing the amendment, even if it's for discussion purposes. And just as Senator Aguilar mentioned, I too will stand shoulder to shoulder, Senator Aguilar, to make sure that we do not disengage an industry, should this amendment be successfully adopted by the voters. I'll return the balance of the time to