

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

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion to elect Senator Stuhr Chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is unanimous. Congratulations, Senator Stuhr. Now we proceed to the election of the Chair of the Revenue Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Speaker Brashear. These are the last 2 years of what will have been a 28-year span in the Nebraska Legislature. And of those 28 years, I will predict that the last 4 will be the most difficult--the 2 that we've just undergone, and the 2 that we're about to undergo. In all those 28 years, these will have been the hardest ones. The last two or three years have been essentially a partnership between the Appropriations Committee, strained to the ends of their abilities to get to the problem of sensible, hard, tough budgeting, and the Revenue Committee, searching for revenue alternatives. One day a couple of years ago, we were looking at the reinstituting of a half-cent sales tax which we had earlier repealed when times were better. And we were looking at the problem of whether or not all of the money should go into the General Fund, or should we continue with the standard, which is that the sales tax on cars should go to the road fund? That day, the road lobby came in and said, we have never sent money from car sales to the General Fund; it has always gone to the road fund. And invoking the memory of Jerry Warner, said, Jerry Warner would never have agreed to sending money from the sales tax on cars to anything but the road fund. I said, well, in a question, were you here during the Kerrey administration? Because that's exactly what Senator Warner did. He agreed, under times not as difficult as these, to divert for six months the sales tax on cars to the General Fund to relieve the General Fund budget. It didn't surprise me that no member of my committee would remember back to the Kerrey administration. It did surprise me that there wasn't a single person in the room who remembered the Kerrey administration or what the real precedent was, as opposed to the precedent which was being offered to us mistakenly from, I think, a well-meaning lobbyist who in fact didn't go back to the history that was there. To