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LB 709

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. And for Senator Stuhr, if the vast majority of the money spent through Medicaid is going to the aged and the disabled, that's where the increase is. So either have fewer disabled people, fewer elderly people, or expect those amounts to continue rising. And the population is increasing in this state. A few years ago, before the new class of senators came, I voted for a tax increase. Included in that tax package was an increase in the cigarette tax, which I had said prior to that I would not vote to increase again. I voted to increase some sales taxes, which it has been a principle of mine not to do. I did not vote for that tax increase to create a set of circumstances where business will suck \$30 million more out of the tax base, \$30 million more on top of what they've been getting anyway. Business can always be served. We're not talking about stopping that drain on the tax base, or from the tax base, that business is responsible for. They dare not be touched. Now, the record of this debate will let those people who wind up on this council know that they're under scrutiny. Since none of us is a seer, a fortune-teller, we are informed by our experiences. And my experience has taught me the hardhearted direction that the bureaucracy takes in Nebraska. Since they dare not touch business, and must continue to feed that ever-hungry beast, they have to find somebody else to exploit, and that's the poor. So as the top end gets colder, you have fewer people paying taxes. You have fewer entities paying taxes when you let business suck out \$30 million off the top. Then you wonder why we might have to increase the tobacco tax, the sales tax. You're going to try to take tax off business equipment. There has to be some point reached where we look at all of these activities. But what I would suggest--and Senator Stuhr might like this, and it would stop the increase so much in Medicaid--we should recognize that people in Nebraska simply live too long. They outlive their usefulness, and they become burdens on the state and those who are still earning money and paying to support them. So we should establish a cutoff age. And I would suggest that 70 would be the age, because people still have enough to get...you know, enough energy to get around. If they don't have enough food, they might can go steal some food off somebody's tree, or go in the store and slip something under their jacket. But when they reach that cutoff