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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 480

have smoke-free restaurants. People will go out to eat. Smokers will go out to eat.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: It's just an hour that they're asked not to smoke. The public will go out in greater numbers because they don't...they can go out. There are a lot of people, particularly in smaller towns, who can only go to a fast-food restaurant, if they have it, because there isn't a place for them to go out. They're being denied the ability to be with the public. We know that this is a public health issue and we need to weigh the public health advantages against the concern that we have about what the role of government is. We have in hundreds of areas bills that pass every year. We protect the public. That's what we're about and that's what this bill is about. And it's protecting the workers, the many people who work in these restaurants, particularly teenagers who work in this industry. We need to protect their health. We need to follow these states and actually whole countries. The country of Ireland,...

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Time.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...the country of Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden have all gone smoke free. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. Senator Beutler, you are recognized to speak.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Schimek, members of the Legislature, I...the city of Lincoln has been mentioned in this debate and so I wanted to at least stand up and tell you exactly what they've done in the city of Lincoln so that you can make whatever judgment you want to make about it. The city council had a series of intensive debates on the smoking issue and they originally, although I don't know exactly the format of the ordinance when they originally settled upon a solution, but it was something similar to the compromises represented in Senator Thompson's bill. Then a period of a few weeks went by, there was some public input I think, and they turned around and banned