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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 480

2003, it was almost \$120 million. I can assure you that figure has gone up since then. I think that's an important factor that needs to be considered here when you talk about being hypocritical and big government. A couple days ago we listened to a day and a half of debate on the problem that we're having with Medicaid expenses and the spiraling costs there and how we can't get a handle on that, how it's out of control, and I agree it is and that was an excellent discussion on that. I thank Senator Erdman for bringing that up front. The thing that's important that we need to consider in that realm is we have a possibility right in front of us on how to control some of those costs. You vote green on LB 480. That will reduce the Medicaid costs considerably. That's an important part of this decision. I know a lot of people have kind of quit listening and stopped listening to the debate because they know all the answers. That's not the case. I think it's time we listen to this issue, realize what a health issue it is, stop listening to the lobby, and do what's right for the state of Nebraska. Thank you. I yield the rest of my time to Senator Thompson, if she chooses.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: (Microphone malfunction)...you, Senator Aguilar, and that was really cute. We all enjoyed your "friends some" remark. And I think our...as we do in a lot of debates, our coalitions shift around a little bit, and I have appreciated all the people who've been willing to get up on the mike and talk about the importance of public health and the importance of this bill. And we do have an opportunity this year to take this step forward and join the many other states that have done this, and done this with now research and evidence beyond what we are...what we have about secondhand smoke and its dangers, but also the impact that it's had on business, and I will be, the next time we debate this, passing out and going over in detail. We're currently just on an amendment to the original...or to the committee amendment, but when we get to the debate of the actual bill I want to spend some time on this, on the fiscal impact to states and to businesses and communities, because there's plenty of research on that now. There's plenty of research on that. The details of this bill are that we are...we are...those of you who are looking at it and have questions, this is the section of