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LB 480

Thompson will have the opportunity to see if she can muster the votes to pass the bill. But the real question is, are we going to ban smoking for the reason of ensuring fair competition across all restaurants in the state? Some in Omaha would like to see that because if the city of Omaha passes a smoking ban, what happens to the communities around that if they don't have one? And how do you regulate that? And what type of an absolute nightmare does that become? So there's all kinds of factions on this thing. The question that Senator Johnson also asked is, where in state policy do we allow addicts to determine the policy? Anywhere we want them to? Anywhere we allow them to. I think there's this assumption that anybody who may be opposed to passing LB 480 seems to think that it's okay that you smoke, which flat-out to me it makes no sense to me why you would stick a burning item in your mouth and inhale the smoke from it. Doesn't make sense to me at all. But then again, at the same time the state of Nebraska collects millions of dollars that we in turn use to fund state government. So at the same point that Senator Friend is asking for a flat-out prohibition,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR ERDMAN: ...then he should also be asking for a flat-out repeal of the cigarette tax, because if it should be an illegal substance then the state of Nebraska and the Appropriations Committee should come up with the \$60 million or \$70 million annually to make up the difference, if we were being consistent. And we won't be. We flat-out will not be consistent because it's not politically acceptable, it's not politically expedient, and even though Senator Friend alludes of communist plots, that probably is the most consistent position to have. So, Senator Johnson, where we allow addicts to dictate the policy is probably where you allow addicts to dictate the policy. I am not an addict. I have never smoked in my life. I have seen the effects of smoking firsthand. I've watched my grandma die of lung cancer. It is a horrible, horrible situation. But as Senator Friend pointed out, it is a legal product. What is the responsible regulation? What is the responsible taxation?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time. Time, Senator.