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passage of this bill. I oppose Senator Bourne's amendment that would create public policy at the state level to discourage good public health policy from happening in our local communities. We should be setting the floor, not the ceiling. We need to work to encourage local communities...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...to have healthy public health ordinances. And we as a body should be setting the standard here in the Legislature for what is clean air that the public should breathe in public places. That's what this is about. And I oppose the Bourne amendment to penalize the city of Lincoln for having a smoke-free workplace ordinance.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. Senator Howard, on AM1052.

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. President. Where does government belong in the lives of people? I've spent 34 years asking myself that question on a daily basis. Where does government belong in the lives of people? And I've not yet had a parent whose child was critically ill, whose child could no longer breathe healthily, say to me, no, we really don't need any government help to pay this hospital bill, or to be there for our child, to see them through. Never. Never has that happened. And yet, in the 60 days that I've been here, I've started to wonder, is this legislative body here to give permission and to walk away when it can no longer afford to meet costs for Medicaid? Are we going to form committees to study this to see who we can eliminate from these benefits? It comes down to, what is the purpose, what is the true mission, what is...what are we here for? I'd really like an answer to that. And I'd really like to know, who is it that's going to be there to support these children, these families, with the rising Medicaid costs that people seem to feel we can't afford to do any longer? There's a direct correlation between people's behaviors, the message the state gives, and what we're going to follow through on. And on that note, I'd like to say I'm very grateful that Senator Byars is still with us, and that he did give up smoking. I think he's such an asset. He's certainly