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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. Since I've been in the Legislature, we've passed four major bills dealing with organ and tissue donation. I think three of them were mine and one of them was Senator Schrock's, and it gave me an opportunity to work a lot with the organ donor community and they refer to motorcycles, not all of them but a lot of them, as donor cycles. I guess if I were really...wanted to push getting more organ donors then I should be supportive of this bill, but I'm not. And I think there's a big difference. Senator Baker talked about a person who lost a foot, maybe they...I don't remember from the story if they bled to death or not, but if they survived they could get a prosthesis, they can walk again. But a head injury, a brain injury is someone who is going to need constant care for a lifetime. And we're seeing a lot more people riding motorcycles who are older now who may have...in addition to the younger people. So our numbers are going up and we're going to have greater challenges in our budget taking care of people who have been in this state for a long time, who will live for quite awhile. So even those 40-year-olds who are riding will still live for a long time in our nursing home, in our care facilities. This was good public policy when it passed. I sat on the Transportation Committee and on the Health and Human Services Committee in my beginning years in the Legislature, so I heard this from both sides. And with the committee I toured Quality Living in Omaha, which takes care of a lot of people who are the people who were injured without helmets, who are going to be there for a very long time because they're not that old when they get injured. As a member of the Transportation Committee, I heard all the testimony from people who would like to ride without a helmet and, you know, I understand all that, but we're deciding now whether to reverse a long-term public policy in this state, one that has kept our citizens safer, one that's kept fewer people from these very, very traumatic brain injuries, and I don't think there's anything that justifies changing that now. I suppose this particular amendment, which would expand to two months...that I passed out to the Legislature the rally schedule, if that's the reason we're pushing this, is for economic development purposes, that's when they would be coming through the state to get to the rally, would be in August. I don't see any reason to extend that to the month of July. And I do support Senator Jensen in