

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 25, 2005

LB 425

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Combs. Senator Brown, you're recognized to speak.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members, if I am going to vote for an override, it will be on this issue, but I'm still not sure whether I will do that. I am very committed to community health centers. One of my staff members is the president of the board for the community health center in north Omaha, which does amazing things. They are the only entity in Omaha that seems to have taken by the horns the issue of STDs in Omaha, which are out of control, especially amongst young people. And I know what they do, what quality services they provide on an absolute shoestring. I'm just going to speak...and I feel like Methuselah talking like this, but (laugh) when I was first in the Legislature--I will borrow from Lloyd Bentsen--I've seen a veto, and colleagues, this is not a veto. The first year that I was on the Appropriations Committee, the Governor vetoed out about ten times the amount of money that we're talking, percentagewise, and Senator Wehrbein and Senator Brashear put together an override package that included one of the issues that we had been strongly lobbied on to put a certain amount in the budget. And one of the lobbyists that had lobbied for this amount came and said that they didn't want to be included in the budget, in the override package. Really? You know, we had been lobbied so hard to get the amount that the Appropriations Committee had put in. Oh, no, they'd made a deal with the Governor that whatever we put in they would lobby...they would...he would get to veto out half so he could say that he vetoed the money (laugh) and so we...and so they didn't want to be part of the package. So this is...the Governor has been quite judicious, I think, in the application of the veto pen, much more so than I've seen in the past, and even though there are things like this, that I think are absolutely compelling, if it had been any bit more than what it was, then I probably would feel differently, as any bit more in the extent overall and any bit more in this particular area. We made a bold step, I think, in terms of taking some of the tobacco money to use for the community health centers, and now we're moving into putting General Fund money into it, and I think that that is absolutely the way to go. And the question really becomes how quickly do