

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

February 28, 2006 LB 75

said, \$10 for everybody who comes to a conference center, and \$2 for everybody who comes to the Qwest Center, and that's how much we're going to give for turn-back. And I wanted an alternative, because there was a theory to the original bill that said, what we want to do is we want to share the growth of a new income stream that will occur because we're going to have resources that we don't now have. The Omaha bill from this year abandoned that theory. I didn't want to abandon it, so I put in an alternative that kept that theory going, which was, the state could share a new income stream back with the city, and then those benefits would be shared not only with that city, but with others around the state. That's why I introduced it. I introduced it because I saw a bill coming in that said \$10 and \$2, it went away from the original theory, I wanted the original theory back before us. And in fact, the Omaha bill failed in the committee, and the bill that I crafted about trying to get back to the original intent of an expanded revenue stream was successful. What about the impact of the conference center? Senator Chambers is largely right, and I think I've said it on the floor before. I think he's indicated that the press has been slow to pick up the accuracy of his predictions, and I at one point said that that's true. What has happened is that the conference center's performance has not measured what was hoped for, what was surveyed, what had been identified at the time in the marketplace it was looked at. I think Senator Chambers believes that that was a knowing misrepresentation at the time. I will tell you that I didn't know that. I think there was a high amount of suspicion that that was rosy-colored. I shared in that suspicion, but others went forward, and there was a rational basis. The state...the city of Omaha had the general bonding authority to do this before that bill was passed, so that didn't come about from the bill that we passed. What came about was the sharing of an income stream back with Omaha, the turn-back proposal. If the turn-back doesn't yield sufficient response, what will happen is Omaha, with a general obligation, will have to levy property taxes and pay for it. If I understand Senator Chambers' position correctly, when that moment comes, there will be a certain amount of political meltdown, and it will give an opportunity to cast blame, to make plans, and to identify the impact on the African-American community in north Omaha specifically. I would suggest to you