

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

March 15, 2006 LB 1060

our lives. What I'm saying here is I do not believe that we can afford this. I also, in visiting with some of you on the floor about this, you questioned me, and I question it, too--what is the role of government?

SENATOR BAKER: Time. Thank you. Senator Kruse, you're recognized to speak.

SENATOR KRUSE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I will not take a position on the amendment. I feel that the \$5 million is high, and the \$1.5 million is low, and therefore, I'm just letting that alone. But I do want to respond and underline what Senator Beutler is saying about the philosophy that we're looking at here. We Nebraskans are ignoring tourist possibilities. We just do a very poor job of that. And that's not knocking the departments; we just...that are doing this. There are good people over there. But we tie their hands and trim them back at many stages. Plus, there's the attitude; that's what I'd speak to more. I come from north Omaha, which is loaded with history. But can you find that referenced anywhere? No. Can you find that referenced in Omaha? No. We have the possibility of establishing a visitors' center in North Omaha that would be the grounding point for tourists loops all around the state. What amazes me about it is that nobody seems to have thought about that. They don't see the potential of it. Whatever we spend here, the \$5 million will be amply returned and repaid; the \$1.5 million will be the same. We just need to change our thinking, get our heads on straight about this and recognize we've got people coming through. We've got 80,000 people a year going past an historic mill from the Mormons, and we don't stop a one of them. We let them all go through, because we don't have anything there for them. We don't have a visitors' center or a place to talk about it, or a hotel, or until recently, a restaurant where a family could stop, a Mormon family could stop to eat. This is a huge area of negligence on our part, and I urge that we see the investment possibility of whatever we do in this. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Kruse. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Baker, members of the Legislature,