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FLOOR DEBATE

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song of the shirt: Fingers weary and worn, / eyelids heavy and red, / A woman sat, in unwomanly rags, / Plying her needle and thread. / Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! / In poverty, hunger, and dirt, / she sang the "Song of the Shirt." / "Work! Work! Work! / Oh, Men, with sisters dear! / Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives! / It is not linen you're wearing out, / But human creatures' lives! / Oh, God! that bread should be so dear, / And flesh and blood so cheap! That's all that I can give you of the poem, but it touches on the circumstances under which many women suffer, conditions in which far too many of them live. This is not a tax break for a free-wheeling, free-booting, risky, profit-making, speculative activity. This is aiming at an existing condition which needs to be mitigated, and there can be some mitigation by the adoption of this amendment. It does exempt from sales and use taxes this work or activity that will be undertaken by the housing authorities to try to find housing, provide housing for women and poor children who are in desperate need. The \$10 million to ethanol was a part of the deal, and that's clear. But while dealing at that level for those interests, the flesh and blood interests and concerns related to poor women and their children ought not to be ignored. I cannot tell you that this amendment, if adopted, is going to solve all of the housing problems of people who have them. Never will any legislative body, whether we're talking about the U.S. Congress or the legislature of any state, appropriate enough money to address the housing problems of its people. Think of all the billions going into Afghanistan and Iraq to kill. If a tiny fraction of that money were addressed to the social problems in this country, there could be the alleviation of a lot of misery. But it seems easier to get money for the art and practice of killing than for the art and practice of uplifting and healing. I do not think this amendment is unreasonable. I don't know that anybody has stood on the floor and denied that there is a problem as far as housing. Nobody has stood on the floor with a solution, although if enough money were available many of us could offer what would be a total solution, but we know that is not going to happen. Although this is a tax break, it is not an appropriation. The construction industry has been helped and I will support that amendment, but this one ought to be adopted, too. You accepted the ethanol amendment for \$10 million. This amendment does not have a cadre of special interest groups. It