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FLOOR DEBATE

March 28, 2006      LB 1038

That committee reports the bill to General File with committee amendments. (AM2771, Legislative Journal page 1119.)

SENATOR BAKER: Senator Schimek, to open on LB 1038.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President and members. LB 1038 regards the State Fair Board, and possible leasing of land for construction. Last fall, I had a conversation with then director of DAS regarding this matter. And you know, rumors do sometimes fly around here, and I myself had heard a rumor that there was some thought of leasing some of the land out there to build a Hilton Hotel. Now, there's probably no truth to those rumors at all, but one never knows. And so that was probably one of the things that prompted the conversation. I understood that there was an agreement between DAS and the State Fair Board regarding property issues. But whether the State Fair Board could lease property to a private entity for new construction was subject to some interpretation. So the original draft of LB 1038 was to prohibit any capital construction by a private entity on State Fair Grounds, period. However, I was open to the possibility of having some kind of a process established in case such a matter came up. I felt that if a process was allowed, it should involve both the executive and the legislative branches of government. At the hearing on this bill, an amendment was offered that provided a process by which the State Fair Board could lease property to private entities. It was based on the state's process of accepting gifts of property. The Ag Committee, along with the State Fair Board and DAS, negotiated a compromise on the whole matter, which is reflected in the committee amendment. I support the committee amendment, which I'll let Senator Kremer explain to you in more detail. And I do want to thank everyone concerned in this matter for their work on the bill and on the amendment. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Schimek. As stated, there are committee amendments. Senator Kremer, I believe, to address the committee amendments.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. Senator Schimek did explain very well the process that we went