

SPEAKER NICHOL: I would like to welcome some visitors in the North balcony. They are visitors of Senator Schmit. They are 19 fifth grade students from Mead School in Mead, Nebraska and Mrs. Young is their teacher. Would you please stand and be recognized. Thank you for attending the Legislature. Senator Kahle and then Senator Fowler.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. President and members, I oppose this amendment. I know that you can make all kinds of arguments about morality and whether it is immoral to keep that money but as I look at the Governor's list of vetoes that he has made one really bothers me and that has to do with driver's education aid which is \$1,236,287. Now this money was promised to the school districts, and you talk about tax relief, that is going to take it right out of the pocket of the taxpayer back home. Not only that, we didn't do anything about LB 522 of any consequence this year so that didn't help the taxpayer back home either. So now you are saying, oh, my, we have got to give him back \$21 real quick here so that he will be happy or she and the next thing we take it away by the bucketsful and give it back by, again as I said, the eyedropper, is the approach I guess. But I would certainly rather just keep that money right in the old general fund and try to help the taxpayers in other ways rather than dole it out a little bit here and a little bit there because whether it is \$7 or \$21 it is not going to make that much difference. You might say, oh, goodness, that \$21, that is a lot of money. How many of us spend more than that on one meal when we go out to eat or whatever we do. I realize all the people can't do that and aren't doing that but it is kind of fun to watch because we are talking about giving them back a little bit so they are going to be happy and then taking it away in big chunks. But I certainly agree with Senator Warner that there is more involved here than just whether we give back \$21 or \$7 or whatever it is. If we start giving money away we don't have, we are following the practices of federal government which they seem to continue to do and I, personally, don't want to get into that kind of a situation in Nebraska. I think it would be better just to forget about refunds on this food tax, so-called food tax, and try to hold the budget in line with the present tax base that is being talked about, rather than give money back and then say, well, we can't do that, we will have to raise taxes. It is just as simple as that. As far as it being wrong to keep that tax, I don't think anybody ever really promised the food tax...those of us that pay the food tax that we were ever going to get it back. The state government has been giving an amount back each year. Over the years we have argued about how much that should be and it was really a decision of this body what went back or if any went back so I think it is still our