

SENATOR WESELY: I don't know. I wasn't around.

SPEAKER NICHOL: It was long enough to build the sports arena, wasn't it? The answer is yes. Okay. When did we take the tax off? It is still on. So this is what we are going to do here, ladies and gentlemen, I will predict it. I am objecting to your adding one more year simply because it will just continue this forever. Thanks.

PRESIDENT: Is there further discussion on the Wesely amendment? Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Senator Nichol is diverting the issue from what is before us, Senator Nichol. You are trying to talk about the tax. We are not extending the tax. What we are talking about is where the money goes from the tax that is collected. The tax has always been there and it will always be there. It is a severance tax. The issue before us is where does this severance tax money go. We started in 1981 to divert part of that money over to the schools to weatherize their buildings. The only issue before is do we continue that program or not. And the issue actually before us now is do we continue it to '88 or '89, I am saying to '89. The tax is a completely different issue. It is on the books. It is a separate issue. The question before us is the program of how we utilize some of that tax. I think the decision to go toward the weatherization program has been very successful. It has proven itself. Senator Nichol's comments have totally diverted you away from what we are talking about. We are talking about a weatherization program that has been utilizing some of that severance tax money that always has been collected and will be collected no matter what happens to this weatherization program and it has resulted in a number of savings to the state. The handout that I have for you, and ignore the attachment of the bill because that is obviously inconsequential at this point, but the top cover letter from the Department of Energy shows that we have saved tremendous amount of money and this is not a Lincoln bill, it is not an Omaha bill, it is not a rural bill, it is a Nebraska bill. As you can see, it has affected 550 public school buildings and 263 school districts. There have been 800 grants totaling over \$13 million. This is a project that has also resulted in 420 jobs and \$38 million in local economic activity. It is a project that helps everybody in the State of Nebraska. It