

It was in that light that we set, or sent to the floor, the first year that it was our responsibility, a bill to do that. It is my assumption that that is the reason for the bill here this year and it should be the last thing that we do. And I don't care whether you set a rate now and move it on or whether you don't. You do need the vehicle to do whatever you decide to do with it, but you need a vehicle to do it. And I would certainly oppose at this point repealing or indefinitely postponing LB 539. It is an essential tool that we need in our appropriation process and rate setting process. Please don't kill it at this point. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Senator Vard Johnson and then Senator Chambers.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I am going to rise in opposition to the kill motion. Senator Warner and Senator Carsten have stated the issue absolutely correctly which is this. Until the outcome in this body is determined on spending, this measure must be amended to provide a one percent income tax rate increase and sent to Final Reading. Until the outcome is known, we have to have this measure with an amendment on Final Reading. And once the outcome is known, if this body in its collective wisdom concludes that existing tax rates will simply allow our then existing appropriation together with vetoes and veto overrides to be financed, then LB 539 can be killed on Final Reading. But to kill it today is premature. It bets the entire hand prematurely and it should not be done. We should amend this bill, as Senator Warner is going to suggest, to increase the income tax rate one percentage point and we should, with 49 votes, advance the bill to Final Reading and let it sit there. Let it sit there until Wednesday afternoon at four-thirty, and then cast that final decision. But to act now acts prematurely. Now the time of forcing hands is all over with. You know, initially there was some reticence about any measures to increase tax rates because that might have some adverse affect on our ability to expand tax base ala LB 715 and 273 and the like. That is behind us. There might have been some reticence about increasing tax rates because we still have the budget bills to consider. Now the budget bills could still be considered yet this afternoon, but to a large extent the battles have been fought. To a large extent the die has been cast. I simply say that that one little bit of wisdom is we increase the income tax rate one percentage point, we move this bill