

April 10, 1979

LB 16

The question has been called for. Do I see five hands? I do. All those in favor of ceasing debate vote aye, opposed nay. Record the vote.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 29 ayes, 8 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Motion carries. Debate ceases. Senator, you may close on your bill.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, I am sorry that the debate is ceased. At the same time I recognize that we have to move the bill this morning if we are going to move it. I would make some brief comments and I will let Senator Chambers make some comments so I don't have enough time to let all those who wanted to speak to make some comments. Basically I want to make two points. What we are saying today with LB 16 is that we are going to eliminate the sales tax on food, not immediately, but in December 31, 1981. That means that we have two years to deal with the question of revenue sources and those tough questions that we ought to make but basically we have to make a commitment. Every year we hear the same argument. We don't have the money; we can't do this; we can't do that; it is impossible; it is tough; that sort of stuff. I think it is time now for the Legislature to make that commitment. It will give us two years to figure out just exactly how we are going to make that commitment. The revenue estimates again are between sixteen and thirty million dollars. We have to make the commitment now. We will have the time to work it out. I want to say one more thing that I think is most compelling. I talked about 9% of the population that do not bother to apply for the rebate. Senator Koch said those people are generally the elderly and that is true. That is ever so true and the population is getting older and that is ever so true. But let's talk about those people, that 9% in numbers. Let's talk about the 154,000 people who do not receive the credit or the rebate, a 154,000 individuals who contribute to this state \$20.00 a year. I want to say that that money ought to be theirs. It should not be the state's to spend as we would on questionable projects sometimes and for that reason we need to make this commitment. Senator Chambers, I yield to you the remainder of my time.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I will be brief. This is one of those issues which I genuinely feel is not a fiscal question. I think it is a