

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a few minutes to speak to Senator Newell's amendment. What Senator Newell is suggesting by his amendment quite simply is that this body ultimately pass LB 16, removing the sales tax on food but that it withhold the effective date of the legislation until 1983. Senator Newell suggests quite simply that we allow more time to pass so that we can develop alternate funding sources for the local subdivisions in particular that will be adversely affected by the repeal of LB 16. I can support what Senator Newell is doing. I think that is a wise and correct approach because, fellow members, I swear to goodness, in the end it is incredibly important that we do remove the sales tax on food. I sat here quietly three or four or five days ago and I listened to Senator DeCamp and Senator Schmit discuss how for the first time in the history of this country we were using food as a weapon abroad. Well we have been using food as a weapon at home for many years and I personally believe that to continue to tax food is to use food as a weapon against poor people. In the 1960s Congress amended the Food Stamp Program to make certain that no food stamps could go to shared households. What Congress was doing in the 1960s is it was striking out against the hippie household but what it actually did in the end is it picked up all the households where poor families got together and shared their expenses. The United States Supreme Court ultimately held that was unconstitutional in the case of *Moreno vs. Department of Agriculture*. But it was Congress using food as a weapon against an unpopular group. In the 1960s a Black Panther Party in Des Moines, Iowa, started a school breakfast program to feed needy black and white youngsters in their community and the first thing that happened was that our Federal Bureau of Investigation went to Des Moines, Iowa, to investigate what the Black Panthers were doing with food because they might be winning some hearts and minds. They found nothing wrong. They found it to be healthy and they sent a letter back to the seat of government, Washington, D.C., and they said, you know what the Black Panthers are doing in Des Moines, Iowa, is all right and the F.B.I. nationally sent a letter back and said, look some more. There has got to be something wrong there. Again, food is basically perceived as a weapon. It is a weapon against our own people, our poor people, our hurting people and we continue to fight this weapon by taxing food. Now I have some sense at this time in my life as to what the tax on food means. My wife has been in Kearney. She has a job teaching. That means she is gone during the week and she comes home on the weekends so that means that I go to the grocery store and I get our food and every time I go I see what that food sales