

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President, members, 593 deals with an area that, quite frankly, I knew very little about. I've done a considerable amount of studying in this particular area last evening and this morning. I'm becoming more and more convinced that the entire area that 593 deals with is bad public policy. Not that 593, itself, is bad public policy, but the entire area of the statutes is bad public policy. What the premium tax does, the premium tax, as near as I can understand it, is a mechanism whereby the insurance companies pay taxes to the state and to the local political subdivisions, as Senator Conway explained to you and then we turn around with the premium tax and say that in case an insurance company becomes insolvent then some how it is the taxpayer's fault because that premium tax that normally goes to the state and to the political subdivisions is suddenly siphoned off into a fund to make these insolvent insurance companies well again, up to a point. Now I think there is an awful lot of similarities to this whole concept with the bill that Senator DeCamp brought to us that I've got a kill motion on that we discussed just very briefly in 691 and that is what we are saying that somehow or other all of the citizens of the state are, at some point, responsible when an insurance company goes belly up, that society has got to pay part of the cost of that insurance company going belly up through additional taxes because, obviously, if the insurance company is not paying their taxes then somebody else picks up the additional cost. That might have been a decision back in 1975, as Senator Barrett pointed out, with the passage of LB 217. But I think that was a bad decision. I think it was a wrong decision. I have some real problems with saying that all of society some how is to blame when those things happen. It would be very similar if I came to each of you and told you that you were going to have to pay more through your taxes to prevent my business from going bankrupt. Not too many of you would be willing to do that. We may come to you and say we are going to ask you to pay some dollars through your taxes to help alleviate the concern of people when they are going bankrupt, but we are not going to ask you to bail them all out. We are not going to ask you to make them well again. We are not saying it is your fault, necessarily, as taxpayers. But that is what we say with the premium tax, as near as I can understand it. I think that the issue that 593 deals with even though, as I indicated, 593 doesn't specifically say that, I think it opens the top on a can of worms that this Legislature ought