

SENATOR VICKERS: It is unfortunate that the industry that I spent my entire life in cannot be broad-minded enough to recognize where their problems are at, cannot be broad-minded enough to recognize that how they treat their own industry is reflected on the way the state, itself, is structured, cannot recognize the fact that when we talk against closed shops, closed unions, or forced unionism, that is exactly what we are doing. I wish now that I'd been a little more aggressive with LB 456. I am convinced, and I know a lot of folks are not, that the average farmer, livestock feeder, rancher is represented behind the glass doors, I'm convinced that that is not true. I'm convinced that the average person out there really has some big questions about those checkoff dollars that they've been paying for a long period of time, and really is not that great of an amount for any one individual. But when they ask themselves a question, you know we've got these wonderful commodity checkoff boards that we read about all the time, we've got these people who are traveling across the seas to promote our product, and they are really going to help us out, and then they go to the banker and the banker says, can you pay anything on your note, and they say, no, we can't, as a matter of fact we can't even pay the interest. I suspect there are a lot of those people that go back home and they say to their wife, you know, Martha, I wonder, I wonder if all that checkoff dollars have done us any good because we're going broke. I wonder why promoting that product is helping so much if, in fact, we can't make any money raising it. I wonder if those organizations, who say they are helping us out, really care that we're going to have to have a farm sale next week. I don't think they do. I think the only thing they care about is themselves, perpetuating their own existence, having a nice little office down here in Lincoln, being able to use some of those tax...yes, their tax dollars, those checkoff dollars to get on the plane and go somewhere and talk to some foreign nation about using some of our product, that they can talk them into using, admittedly. Some of our wheat checkoff dollars have built markets in foreign countries, China for example. Guess who is selling wheat to China today? It's not the American wheat producer because we can't compete with some of the foreign nations because of the value of our dollar, because of the fact that our federal government does not have exporting of our farm products as a very high priority. So we built the product, we built the market, but it didn't put any more dollars in a lot of folks pockets.