

to China. Now who has the most clout in that? We talk about a mandated system, a mandated system where you have your right to get your provisions back and everything else, or right to take trips and everything else like this. We're talking tax dollars. All these lobbying groups, behind the glass out there, that are supporting themselves through yours and my tax dollars, they are coming down here lobbying for their own good, great benefit. I want to ask this body time and time again if we don't need this, if the farmers don't deserve the option, this does not mandate anything, if they don't deserve the option that tells me that everything is wonderful and glorious in the agriculture community. I think if you look at any newspaper, look under farm sales or anything else, nobody in here can tell me that things are grand and glorious in the agriculture sector. Things look bleak now, they look bleak later. The only way they are going to help themselves is to help themselves. They deserve the right and the option to take part of this checkoff money and do lobbying with it. If we deny them this privilege, everybody in here campaigns, they campaign continually that we are going to help the farmers, then they say what can you do to help the farmers of Nebraska. Well, we can't do anything to help the farmers of Nebraska, you've got to do it all on the federal level. This is what we are asking. This is something we can do. We can give them the right and the opportunity to take some of their own dollars, not dollars that anybody else in here put in the kitty, to take their own dollars and go back to Washington, D.C. and help influence legislation for their own benefit. I think they deserve the right and the option to do this. I oppose the kill motion, by the way.

PRESIDENT: Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I'll try and take a little less festive approach to this issue. Senator Pappas has done a pretty good job in his speech in covering many of the points that I wanted to cover. I think he's done an excellent job pointing out that these checkoff programs do not have to use the funds for the purpose of influencing legislation. It is permissive language to allow them that option. I think that is an important part of this bill. You know Senator Pappas also hit on another point that I did want to bring out. Since taking over as Ag Chairman, I've been approached by I don't know how many farm groups and how many people in the media have asked me