

year as it did last year notwithstanding the change in the exemption, and with that, I would offer the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT: Senator Conway, do you wish to speak on the committee amendments? Then I have Senator Marsh next.

SENATOR CONWAY: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I rise in support of the committee amendments. I believe that putting it into context the original bill, like I say, was designed to address the two smaller tracks in the state, but as we put it into context with the industry as a whole, we will note that Nebraska is not unique but does have some special qualities looking at horse racing as an industry. As we look at the process by which we have larger and smaller tracks, and even though we do have the smaller tracks by virtue of their handle and the nature of the way they process the racing in the state, they are in a situation where these are...in many cases can be viewed as training tracks and developing tracks for the larger tracks and it all fits into a bit of a synergy as we put the entire industry all into this single package, and so as we look at this process, we see that even though we have some of the smaller tracks who their handle and the activity is not as great as they are in the larger tracks, they are very much a contributor and the industry recognizes those as all being a valuable contribution to the industry. The original bill, like I say, was designed to make sure that the smaller tracks were not burdened in the tax structure in such a way that it would run them right out of existence because they do fit into that industry pattern. So the original bill was designed that way and now that we look at the committee amendments it is designed to address some of the future problems that we may see in the industry, and I think as we look at the statistics that were presented in the Revenue Committee at the time that I presented the bill as well as the information the task force worked on, we can see that this particular industry is a great contributor to the State of Nebraska, to the agricultural community to the extent to which the number of horses that are being fed and raised and trained in the State of Nebraska, the activity that they bring, the tourism and the entire package as we put it together is really somewhat of a sleeping giant in the State of Nebraska that we have had for quite sometime, and for most of that time we have had somewhat of a unique situation in the Midwest in that we were about the only state around