

and others in which very equitable cases will be made. Any change in the posture that the Revenue Committee has struck means that we will clog and put ahead of the primary, the paramount issue before us at this juncture of revenue and budget issues, and that is, what are you going to do about the \$18 million of last year's homestead exemption, not this year's homestead exemption of 556? I can't, in good conscience, vote for this bill coming out and competing for the same dollars that we do not have to spend on a program we have already passed. I would like to be helpful but I can't do it.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator. The watch has stopped on the total time of debate. Meanwhile, a while ago I introduced some students from Weissert School. Are you up here, Weissert? Are you? I guess you weren't there when I introduced you before, but you are from Senator Lamb's District and we were looking up wondering where you were, from District 17, Weissert in Custer County, six eighth grade students with their teacher, and also Senator Schmit has nine juniors from Rising City High School accompanied by their teacher. There was one group that was in before and now there is a second group. If you would all stand, we would like to recognize you and welcome you to the State Legislature and thank you for coming down here today. The next speaker is Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I thought I would talk with you quietly about why this bill, 556, is bottled up in the Revenue Committee and I will talk about something known as real revenue politics. As you can appreciate, most of the bills that are introduced to the Revenue Committee are bills that would provide some exemption to the tax base on behalf of some taxpayer or taxpayer groups. The Revenue Committee will hear a lot of bills that in a sense provide special and favorable treatment to certain kinds of taxpayers. And every now and then we hear a bill that is designed to close down loopholes and exemptions and we also hear bills from time-to-time that are designed to increase rates, like increasing the alcohol tax rate or the cigarette tax rate, or what have you. Well, it is not an easy dynamic, frankly, in the Revenue Committee to keep...to make certain that this floor only has before it those bills that are likely to protect the state tax base and are likely not to cost the state an arm and a leg. I think Revenue Committee after Revenue Committee has learned