

don't know whether it's been pointed out yet, but if it hasn't let me do it now. If these funds were moved over, all of them, would raise the gasoline tax about five and a half cents. You start moving over all the highway user revenues to other state departments, you're getting into some real, real problems because if we're going to maintain the streets and highways and roads and bridges, we're going to have to keep this money in the highway user fund. I would urge you to oppose this amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: I'd like to introduce some guests in the south balcony, please. Senator Withem has guests up there and there are 65 fourth graders from LaVista West Elementary School in LaVista, Nebraska, and their teacher. Would all of you please stand and be recognized? Thank you. Senator Warner, then Senator Sieck.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'd rise to oppose the amendment. This, of course, is an issue we've discussed from time to time for a number of years. The clear impact that has been repeated, I believe the appropriations were Program 195 which is the, as I understand the amendments, \$8.5 million general fund appropriation. Should the amendment carry it takes the money out of the trust fund so you'd be taking approximately \$3.9 million away from the cities and the counties or about 40 some, 45 percent of the increase that was just given to them in LB 112. The other portion then of about 8.6, not quite, would come out of the state's share of the highway user fees and as I understand the amendment clearly, the construction authorized appropriation by the Department of Roads is not touched so that generates another increase in the variable gas tax to maintain that level of appropriation. Actually the issue is a bigger one than that. I find hard to find logic in that several general fund programs are having trouble or had to take cuts so the solution is to take the one solid program and bring that one down too. That really is not the kind of logic it seems to me to be good public policy. If you have a strong program, a reasonable program, and one that is so essential to a state like Nebraska which is a transportation system, totally dependent virtually except for a few main line railroads, totally dependent upon a highway transportation system...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.