

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I probably will be the only one standing up and supporting Senator DeCamp's amendment. And I do that mostly because I am concerned about the race track in Omaha. And for the first time since horse racing was approved in Nebraska in 1935, the industry does face a direct threat from out of state competition. The first parimutuel tax was passed in 1959 and Nebraska's horse racing industry funds more than 35 percent of all state and county fairs and I think that that is one thing that we have to be most concerned about. LB 154 is not just an Ak-Sar-Ben bill and I get a little bit upset when they keep saying Ak-Sar-Ben because we have other race tracks in the State of Nebraska. What we have to do, and I don't know much about horse racing, but I understand that the main part of making it a successful industry is the fact that we have got to attract the best horses in the Midwest and if we don't, we are threatening the racing industry. I urge you to bring back LB 154 for this particular amendment. And evidently there are other amendments up there, so regardless, unless we fight every amendment, the bill will not be read today if one of the amendments that are up at the Clerk's desk is passed. So I think we should at least consider bringing it back and debate the amendment and then decide whether or not we will take up the issue. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. President and members of the body, sorry Harry and Jackie, I rise to also ask you not to bring this amendment back, not because I have strong feelings about Ak-Sar-Ben or strong feelings against horse racing. And, frankly, also to put it on the record, not because I went to the horse races on Sunday and lost money. I was opposed to this before that happened. But I think we need to look at this particular amendment in context and the context of everything else we are doing here this session. I just made a little list of some of the unfortunate type of things we as a body are doing this session, not because we want to, not because philosophically we favor them, but because of the economic situation we are in. One thing we are doing is we are cutting state aid to local subdivisions and thereby raising property taxes. This is after we have spent all of my time here railing against high property taxes and saying we must do something about them. We are having the effect of raising property taxes by cutting state