

SENATOR HABERMAN: It removes a small sum, I think it is \$800,000, from the budget. That money just happens to go to metro buses. That is \$800,000...oh, that is Omaha. Now out of the 800,000 they've already saved roughly 300,000 this year due to the price of diesel. But the point I want to make is I'm going to read some testimony, and then ask the person who put the testimony in the record to answer, if he could be next, and that will possibly either persuade the body to support my motion or I'll withdraw it. So the testimony says, I think it is time we talk about the importance of taxes for the state. It is not fair, it is not fair. A tax system is as good as its basic equity, and fairness and broadness. If this body continues or actually resumes their long-standing history of creating exemptions, we create greater unfairness and greater inequity, and greater injustice. In the last two years we have broken with that tradition by expanding the base and to go back whittling away. It is a terrible, grievous mistake, a terrible, grievous mistake, whittling away at the tax base. Now this is what we are doing. Those words, fellow senators, was from that friend of mine across the hall, that outstanding Chairman of the Revenue Committee, Senator Vard Johnson. Those are words, some of them are taken a little bit out of text, but basically that is what he said. So I would like to ask Senator Vard Johnson to explain the difference in this, and then as I say, I'll probably lose, but I would like to hear him explain that.

SENATOR REMMERS: Senator Johnson, would you respond.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I'm more than happy to explain. I have been a very strong defender of a state tax base which means revenues. I believe it is important that revenues be broad and wide and fair and just. Now Senator Haberman, today, is talking about appropriations. There is a qualitative difference between appropriations and revenues. An appropriation is an allowed expenditure of monies that have already been paid into the state. A narrowing of the tax base is simply a decision by the state to forego certain revenues. But Senator Haberman, even if we were talking about the same issue, even if we were not comparing apples to oranges, but instead in this issue we are comparing apples to apples, I would tell you, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, foolish consistency, Senator Haberman, is the hobgoblin of small minds.