

changes, I believe it was during the last special session, there was argument to exactly what is the rate which corresponds to a previous rate. Now I think some economists, over at the university, had one number. The Department of Revenue had another number, and some of us didn't agree with any of those numbers. So what we are saying here is we are giving a department of state government the authority to decide exactly what is the equivalent rate. I don't think we want to do that. I don't think we should do that. And I think we should strip this bill and use it only as a possible vehicle in case tax rates do need to be adjusted.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Hefner, followed by Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to oppose this bill. I voted against it in committee, in the Revenue Committee, and I'm going to oppose it here on the floor. But we're taking a drastic step here. We're changing the way that we are piggybacking on the federal system, and I don't think it is necessary. It also changes the tax rate to a base of 20 percent. I feel that it gives too much power to our state tax commissioner. I think setting the tax rates for the State of Nebraska should be the responsibility of this State Legislature. I don't think we should give that to the state tax commissioner. The Department of Revenue will figure this rate differently than some of the other accountants in the state. We've seen that the last two or three years. We've seen some of the figures that said that our tax rate should be as high as 24.2, others...other accountants have figured so that we see a tax rate of 19.4. And in this bill, originally, as it is now it was 20.91, I believe. And so I just don't think that we ought to be changing it at this time. Senator Johnson said we'd be prisoners of Congress. We're not prisoners of Congress. Congress only changes the federal law. We piggyback off of the federal system, and if we do not have enough, if the rate does not raise enough money we can change it here year in and year out. We meet every year. In fact last year we met three times. So we don't have to be prisoners of Congress because we do have that flexibility and we can come back here any time and change the tax rates. Colleagues, this is really changing our tax system. Like I said before, we're giving too much authority to one person, and that one person is the state tax commissioner. So I would urge you to vote against this bill.

SENATOR CARSTEN PRESIDING