

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Barrett, and then Senator Chambers. Senator Barrett, please.

SENATOR BARRETT: Mr. President, I move the previous question.

SENATOR CARSTEN: The question has been called for. Do I see five hands? I do. The question is, shall the debate cease? All those in favor will vote aye, those opposed will vote no. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLEKK: 26 ayes, 2 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Debate has ceased. Senator Vard Johnson, you are now closing on your amendment, please.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I would like to have your attention for an important amendment. This is an important policy consideration. This amendment does not in any way reduce the number of dollars going into the Highway Trust Fund, doesn't reduce the number of dollars one whit. So, Senator Hefner, who is not going to be voting for LB 539 to begin with, the amount of dollars going out to your counties will be the same with or without this amendment, with or without this bill. Actually the amount of dollars would be the same with the amendment. They would increase without the amendment if the bill passed. I am dealing with a windfall, an absolute windfall. If this Legislature decides to increase the sales tax, it is making that decision for the purpose of providing additional monies to our General Fund, so it can provide support for Peru State College, so it can provide support for the mentally ill, so it can provide support for the mentally retarded, so it can provide support for the University of Nebraska system, so it can provide support for the needy. That is what General Fund monies are being used for, and if we make the increase in the sales tax, we are making that increase to meet our General Fund obligation. We are not making the increase to deal with highways. That is not the rationale for the sales tax increase, and I am simply saying by this amendment, let that increase flow entirely to the General Fund. Let the increase flow entirely to the General Fund. Cap at 3 1/2 percent the sales taxes that we collect on motor vehicles, cap it at 3 1/2 percent so that that first 3 1/2 percent will go into the Highway Trust Fund but any increase in sales tax on motor vehicles above the 3 1/2 percent simply goes into the General Fund. That is the rationale. That is the argument. Again this amendment does not cut Highway Trust Funds. It