

on how that budget should be shaped. Given those facts, I felt the responsible thing to do was to vote for the items that we did have at our disposal. And I voted saying I was unwilling to make those cuts in those areas. And I'm going to be here voting to increase the sales tax, the delayed sales tax January 1, because I think it is only responsible that if we say what the budget numbers should be, the total budget numbers should be, and that budget number obviously can't be hit with current level of revenues, then it is also important for us to be responsible and say we are willing to make the hard vote, however politically unpopular it may be, to fund that budget, and then try to defend, in your own mind, defend to your constituents why you thought it was important to do so. I'm prepared to do that and I intend to do that.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. Senator Abboud, then Senator Hefner.

SENATOR ABOUD: Mr. President, colleagues, just a couple of remarks about this amendment of Senator Warner's. I think that one of the major responsibilities of the state is adequate roads. I think at least in Douglas County, Sarpy, Douglas County we've had some problems with roads in the past. We seem...every spring there seems to be a crop of chuckholes that pop up. And this spring is no exception. I think that in driving different parts of the state I realize that sometimes the roads are in bad shape. But I think in our particular area we've had some very major problems with our interstate system. They just got done asphaltting it, and I don't know how long that is going to last. But I think that every little bit that the state can contribute to make our roads a little bit better, a little bit safer, is something that we should strive for. Now I don't think that the roads are in perfect shape right now. And I do think that more money does need to be put in there, or at least keeping the funding that we presently have in, or at least at the levels...the percentage of the levels that we put into the Highway Trust Fund. I think the trust fund is a good idea because it...the money is always there, year after year. It provides an adequate supply of money for the construction of highways. Now I don't know if this a problem, if highways are a problem in your district, but they are in my district. I think that we should keep the money in there. With that, I'm going to support Senator Warner's amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hefner, please, then Senator Withem.