

PRESIDENT: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I hate to do this at this late hour but what this amendment would do is strike the enacting clause. This bill allows the Tax Commissioner to set the tax rate when the federal income tax rates change. This bill was introduced by some of the members of the Revenue Committee. I didn't sign on it and I voted against it after we had the public hearing. I think it is poor policy. I think it is a bad policy. And why? Because I feel that the Legislature, we senators, should shoulder that responsibility. I think that elected officials instead of an appointed official, instead of a bureaucrat should be setting these tax rates. Two years ago, two years ago in 1984 we voted to accept that responsibility and previous to that with the Tax Rate Setting Committee met a couple times a year and adjusted the tax rates back and forth. We, in the Legislature, appropriate the money. We spend it and so we should bear the burden of setting the tax rates, I feel, if we spend the money. There is another question. How do we calculate a federal change? Our Tax Commissioner said a while back that the figure should be 21.9 as the start of last year and then we have had other accountants that said that it should be as high as 24 to be equal with what we had before. And then another accountant said that it should be down as low as 19 percent. And so as these accountants figure this and drop it as the federal rate drops, we come up with all kinds of answers. And, of course, we know that we can juggle these figures around. We can twist them and turn them and come up with any kind of a figure we want to come up with. I don't feel that it is right to let an appointed official set the tax rate. I feel that is wrong. We should set it and we can set it. We are down here at least once a year. Last year we were down here three times. So that certainly is not an excuse. Governor Kerrey has said that he feels that it is a poor policy. I just handed out a handout a little while ago and he had a few comments on it. But the hour is getting late and so I am going to withdraw this motion and just ask you to vote red on this bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator...okay, you have withdrawn the motion.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Vard Johnson would move to return the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator Johnson.