

October 31, 1985

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I, at this juncture, am not totally certain as to how I would vote on this motion because I truly and absolutely am of two minds. I am with Senator Carsten and Senator Smith all the way, being a slave to duty. I think that must be my Victorian parental upbringing that when a person calls me to do a task, I have to do the task from the beginning and to the end and if I ever walk away from the duty I always feel the worse for the walk. And so I hesitate to walk away from obligations and duties and responsibilities. And it is absolutely correct that Governor Kerrey called us into special session as is his prerogative to do for us to undertake a program. So mind number one says you stay in your chair and you work it through, tediously, painstakingly and responsibly, but mind number two says this. Governor Kerrey called us into session to do his program, his program and the truth of the matter is, is that this body is a coequal with Governor Kerrey, is a coequal with Governor Kerrey and his program doesn't have to be this body's program. And it seems to me that this Legislature, in and of itself, can in its own traditional legislative fashion, develop its own program which may or may not be identical with Governor Kerrey's program. In fact, I know one of the items that a majority of legislators want to do, a majority. I have no question at all about that. A majority of legislators want to increase the state's income tax rate retroactively, no question at all about that. That would represent this body's program because this body would choose by a majority vote to do that and to take the consequences in the next elections. But this body would choose to do that because this body thinks that is the responsible thing to do, but that's not Governor Kerrey's program because Governor Kerrey has said time and again that he has no desire to increase the income tax rate. He instead, wishes to withhold his blessing for the income tax rate increase so that we will carry out the level of budget cuts that he believes are the responsible budget cuts to make. My sense is that we will be haunted over the next...over the regular session by our failure to act this session. My sense says that we should use this session as the opportunity to act with our program so that we will not be so haunted over the next session by the limited actions that Governor Kerrey has called upon us to do this session. My feeling is that we could well