

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I think Senator Haberman's proposal is absolutely on target. When they put these amounts on the registration fee they are hidden, duplicitous taxes in the first place. They are disguised as one thing and hidden from the public and not assessed in a straightforward manner, and now not only is the tax a hidden one, it is an absolutely dishonest one. The state has gotten into a financial bind, as states all over the country have done. I don't think, because of a problem existing, there is an automatic justification for any means to be adopted to try to bail the state out of that situation. I know this morning honesty is not going to be the prevailing wind. But on this issue at least there should be a chance. The tobacco lobby was very strong and they got what they wanted and the deal was cut. There are people who dropped off the tobacco tax in exchange for their vote on the income tax. This is what I talked about the other day. It is happening according to the schedule and program of those big interests who control what happens in the Legislature. So, in the process of giving the big ones and the controllers everything they want, I don't think it is too much to ask that the public, which is as Senator DeCamp said being sheared and if God didn't want them sheared he wouldn't have made them sheep, give them something in the way of integrity, or at least the show of it from the Legislature. This money ought not be assessed against people and placed in the General Fund when it was trickily assessed in the first place, supposedly for drivers education. So I'm hoping that there will be support to bring this proposal back. While we are on this, this whole idea of the deals that have been cut, to my knowledge LB 5 is small potatoes and wasn't a part of it. It only involves the welfare of the public, not the tobacconists or any of the others, so it was not even really strongly considered. So nobody will be violating their oath to the special interests while at the same time upholding their oath that they took when they became senators. But, like so many things in government, that oath is perfunctory and has no meaning whatsoever. It is just a formula like abracadabra that a person must go through and articulate in order to sit in one of these seats, sell out the public interest and kowtow to the special interest groups. If I were in that lobby and worked for R.J. Reynolds and the others who may have helped boost Nebraska's economy, at least for the lobbyists, then I would be very pleased at what the Legislature is doing because the