

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: ...see why the state should subsidize this area to the tune of 100,000. I support Senator Lamb's amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Before I proceed to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of Senator Labedz. We have 60 fourth graders from Ashland Park School in Omaha with their sponsors. They're in the south balcony. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being with us. The next speaker is Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, we're to the point now where we're talking costs a little bit. And in one sense I don't really object to the Lamb amendment, because this bill has an A bill with it, and we need to deal with the question of whether you think the costs are appropriate or not, one way or the other. So, if Senator Lamb strikes the fund from the green copy of the bill, it's really redundant and, in that sense, I don't oppose the Lamb amendment. However, let me speak to the question of the appropriateness of this kind of spending, especially in terms of what's going on in the rest of the nation. Folks, we are way behind in the sense that...and if you agree with the philosophy that recreational opportunities for your citizens are important, and that they're important in terms of tourism, they're important in terms of attracting people who want to live in your state. They have a very direct relationship, in people's minds now, to the quality of life. Nebraska, the good life, should include good recreational opportunities. And the fact of the matter is we're getting way behind, we're getting way behind. Let me tell you what's going on in the other states. Thirty-four states now have networks of trails, and it may even be a larger number than that because the only statistics I can get are on rail trails. Now rail trails are those where they've taken abandoned railroad right-of-way and converted them into trails. Of course, there are all other kinds of trails other than trails that used railroad land. But 34 states have rail trails. There's 3,293 miles of those trails now being maintained by political subdivisions in the states and, by and large, by the state agencies that are in control of these. Nebraska has no miles of rail trails. We have a few miles of city trails in Douglas County, and in Lancaster County. I believe there are a couple of miles of trails out in Kearney,