

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. I would like to call the senators' attention now to the south balcony. Special guests today of Senator Schimek are 47 first grade students from Lakeview Elementary School in Lincoln, with their teachers. Would they please rise and be recognized. Welcome to the Chamber. Thank you. Senator Byars, you are next, followed by Senators Robinson, Janssen, Elmer, Horgan, and Hartnett. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Madam President and colleagues. I do have a couple of questions for Senator Beutler, strictly clarifying type questions but I want to state my intention foremost to be in support of the committee amendments, which do become LB 203. As Senator Vrtiska and Senator Beutler in their dialogue established, I think it is imperative upon us, as representatives of all of the people of the State of Nebraska, to understand that this isn't just a local problem, and certainly as many...as many small communities, medium-sized communities, large communities and the areas around those wrestle with this problem, we, as we bring down and recognize federal mandates and the state mandates that we, ourselves, impose are going to have to wrestle and come up with some difficult answers to this very, very difficult problem, and we can't hide our head in the sand. We have to move forward with it. The one thing I think we need to be especially careful of as we do this is to not find an easy way out, taxing someone who may be more passive than others in relationship to their representation here in this body or in the state. And I think we need to recognize that this is a problem that every single one of us share, and we all have to accept responsibility for it. As we were...as we had legislation introduced, as we supported it or in some cases did not support it, I think many of us didn't possibly understand the full ramifications of legislation that we voted for and supported in the past, and now we need to come back and look at this, look at what we have done and reassess, and in instances where we've made policy decisions that might have been in error, to change that, and where we can enhance or improve on those policy decisions, we need to do so. And I think this legislation addresses that and I compliment Senator Horgan, Senator Beutler, and the committee for wrestling with that. To bring things into focus, and if Senator Beutler might yield to a couple of questions.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes, sir.