

April 8, 1994

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other thing the Nebraskaplex study did is it brought the city and the county together...

SENATOR WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...in an agreement, basically the county agreeing that the city should go ahead and develop the auditorium, the county would go ahead, as it could, and develop Ak-Sar-Ben, and that together they would look at the possibility of a convention center down the line. That's the agreement that we are working under today and that's the agreement that allowed the election to go forward last March, March of 1993, for the auditorium, which is really the first stage in the development of those kinds of projects, an arena for downtown Omaha. The next stage, I hope, would be a convention center facility, and also as part of the next stage would be enhancement of the facilities at Ak-Sar-Ben. But in conclusion, Mr. Speaker and members, I urge this body to allow the citizens of Omaha to implement their sales tax revenue-raising project...

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...to allow for the development and renovation of the Omaha Civic Auditorium and the zoo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Mr. Clerk, I understand there is an amendment on the desk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Yes, there is, Mr. President. Senator Wickersham would move to amend the Ashford amendment. (AM3864 on file in the Clerk's Office.)

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. This amendment has not been filed in the Journal. It is on your desk, however. It is AM3864. Senator Ashford, in his opening, I think, did a good job of describing of what he saw the benefits to the City of Omaha would be from his bill. My amendment is intended to focus us on tax policy, tax policy for the State of Nebraska. We have a tax program in the State of Nebraska now that costs us \$56 million, \$56 million. It is the local option sales tax. How does it cost us \$56 million? Because we have allowed cities the option of having a tax up to