

Senator Schimek, do you wish to speak to the motion to reconsider? Senator Schimek, do you wish to speak to the motion to reconsider? No. Senator Wesely, the motion to reconsider.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President, and members, I'm a little shocked by the vote that we just took and I applaud Senator Ashford and those who support the proposal. But, after listening to all the talk from members of the Appropriations Committee and others about how we can't afford to do this and we can't afford to do that, to turn around now and to see some of the votes to support the sales tax for Omaha seems to have that argument we heard last night ring a little hollow to me right now today. I mean, the question is we have tremendous needs in the state budget. We have pressures to try and meet those commitments that the state has to make, and now we're turning around and saying because the city is having a difficulty, when there are options available to the City of Omaha, as I mentioned, where they can go forward with a bond issuance, as Lincoln did, and tax themselves and take care of their problems, there's a local property tax that's there to fund, local needs. That's the way the state tax system was set up. But, because they're having some difficulties, they're turning to the state to bail them out in this particular situation and, lo and behold, we're evidently 30 of us willing to do that at the same time that we're talking about how we're not going to do this and not going to do that in regards to different elements of the budget where we're clearly underfunding the needs of the State of Nebraska and the state services that people, I think, have a legitimate right to access. I'm just surprised and shocked at that. I think, again, the history of this issue is something you have to keep in mind. This is a context. This isn't a singular type of thing pulled out of the air without any sort of rhythm to it or any sort of prior history. You know, I got elected in 1978 and came down here and listened to Al Veys talk about the city sales tax issue which was a hot issue back then. They just needed it for a year, as I remember, but back then they needed it extended another year or something. Well, we went along and I was of...you know, just thought, well, that sounds okay. But that other extension became permanent and then additional expansion of that, and on and on until we're here today and we say, well, this will be a year and then a couple years for Lincoln, and, of course, they'll go away. And I'm telling you, if history is any lesson to be learned from here, it's that this isn't going to be a temporary situation. It's most likely to be converted into a longer term commitment. I