

February 20, 1975

SENATOR SAVAGE: Now the following lights were on in this order: Senators Frank Lewis, Bereuter, Cope and Chambers. Chair recognizes Senator Frank Lewis.

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Cavanaugh bill not withstanding his recent actions, of course. The purpose of rising to support the bill and to make a couple of statements. The bill has more of an affect than just on the city of Omaha. There is considerable interest among some of the other communities and there is considerable interest within my own community. I think this is a tool to go before the voters. Let them discuss the issue at that point and then, if they want to authorize us the authority to proceed, they may do so. I believe the bill has a great deal of validity to us, has a great deal of validity in terms of improvement of our communities. I would urge the support of this particular bill.

SENATOR SAVAGE: Chair recognizes Senator Bereuter.

SENATOR BEREUTER: Mr. Chairman, colleagues, a number of comments have been made concerning the importance of this legislation to the city of Omaha. I agree with those comments. However, I would like to stress that if you take a look at the census of housing and related material, the largest percentage of delapidated or deteriorated housing in this state exists in the small communities of this state. Those are the areas that have the high concentrations. In fact, the relationship is very clear. The smaller the community, the larger the percentage of deteriorated housing. This bill is a bill that is important to the entire State of Nebraska and especially the small community. I think that they could develop programs to utilize this constitutional amendment and enabling legislation that the Legislature would see fit to enact. Therefore, we need to think of this as a bill which would be of assistance to all communities in this state, if they choose to utilize it.

SENATOR SAVAGE: Senator Cope.

SENATOR COPE: Mr. Chairman and members, I support this bill. I'm a member of the committee. I won't go into all the details as to why I support it because of the various ideas already presented.

SENATOR SAVAGE: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I also support this bill. Rather than think in terms of dollars and cents, or tax money only, we ought to look at a bit of philosophy. They talk about the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in this country. Before you can have happiness or a decent lifestyle you must be able to provide an adequate shelter for your family. Now the power to tax, it has been ruled, is the power to destroy. In this bill the only one appearing against it was Mr. Rhunke from the county officials, and they are looking only in terms of dollars and cents. We're looking at peoples lives and we're about to make a decision that is in the nature of policy. I don't think that any county or anybody who would collect property taxes would be impoverished or deminished at all by the passage of this bill. We're talking about a