

April 29, 1975

in planning powers for the Department of Roads so that they can integrate public transit planning into their other travel plans. It makes the department of roads a primary agency involved in transportation planning. It provides for review by the commission of aging for those programs involved for senior citizens. It is a outline of the bill and I would be glad to answer any questions that the Senators may have.

PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the bill and maybe give you an indirect report of a study that we made this summer when I was chairing the sub-committee for the elderly for the Health and Welfare Department. I visited many of your communities and I think that we made 5 or 6 as I recall Senator Maresh. We were in Scotts Bluff, Norfolk, Fairbury, Kearney, Bellevue and the number one problem that was addressed by the senior citizens of this state by the elderly that constitute almost 200,000 people, more than that in fact, 2 to 3 hundred thousand people in this state with transportation. The number one problem and I think that Senator Maresh would bear this out, that everyone referred to was the fact that in order to retain their life styles to continue in a normal fashion in an on-going basis one of the most difficult things for them was the need for transportation. The critical need for transportation. We found this problem is in the rural areas, in the small towns, there is where no system is available. Certainly I believe that the dime ride in Omaha and Lincoln is very valuable to those people on fixed income. But I think that the most significant part of this bill is to provide a transportation system for people that live in Axtell, Gibbon, Hershey, Maxwell, and those districts, because those people have no transportation available to them at all. My community happens to be fortunate enough to be one of those that has mini buses, I guess that is what they are called Steve, I can't remember...Oh, handibuses, and that has worked out very effectively. I'm saying that this bill includes and Senator Fowler if I am wrong, correct me, this bill will include those kind of services for those communities. A lady from, help me if I say it wrong, I always do this, is it Humphrys or Humphry? It is just Humphry. That is one of the issues that I recall most vividly when we had the hearing at Scotts Bluff was that a woman said that we have no means of transportation. I don't know Senator Kelly, I think that somebody might have brought her down, but at least she appeared before a public hearing, which I think is commendable, don't you? I thought that you would. But, this bill is an approach to resolve some of the problems of transportation, particularly in the rural areas, and I think that it is very important and I think that we have an obligation in this area to try and provide for people an opportunity to maintain their life styles as near normal as possible and I think that the bill has extreme merits and the Urban Affairs committee for the last two or three years has worked on this same issue. I believe it is going to at least resolve in this bill in providing much needed transportation systems for the elderly. I would encourage you to vote for the bill.