

April 30, 1975

SENATOR GOODRICH: I would say in excess of that amount.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Would you say they would get ten million dollars?

SENATOR GOODRICH: I'd say that would be closer to it.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: All right. Thank you, Senator Goodrich. Members of the Legislature, I find it hard to believe that Omaha is concerned about losing two million dollars from this food tax credit because they are required by the government to have an affirmative action program, which means that Omaha, the city, is not to discriminate in the hiring and upgrading of employees, city employees. Now the City Council has not adopted such a program so they stand to lose ten million federal dollars. In Chicago, 68 million dollars were withheld for this very reason. Mayor Richard A. Daly is a kingmaker. He has something to do with who is going to be president. I like Mayor Zorinsky in Omaha but I don't think he has that kind of prestige nationally or that kind of power politically. So if Chicago can be brought to heel for lack of an affirmative action program, notably in its police and fire department, the same thing can happen to Omaha and will happen and a suit to accomplish that is being prepared. If Omaha is not concerned about losing this ten million dollars, then they are running a game down on you when they say they are worried about losing two million. I drew this little cartoon to show the Omaha octopus reaching out to get money from the little cities and the big cities and the middle sized cities throughout this state to help Omaha do what, build a parking garage. That is what Omaha is trying to get additional revenue for. The parking garage is not going to benefit the citizens. When you talk about a tax on food, which would benefit the citizens, removal of the tax, consider the very poor who reckon this amount of money in terms of the meals that they would purchase over a year's time. Keep in mind, also, that Omaha is not losing all of that 1% tax, they are losing only the 1% of it that is levied on food. Everything else that they tax under the sales tax, they will still get. I hope that in Senator Goodrich making this motion you will understand that he and I were friendly enemies on it. I couldn't afford to offer a motion to bring this bill back to strike an amendment when I am in favor of the amendment. I don't think Omaha is going to be crippled at all. Remember this, Omaha nor Lincoln nor Bellevue saw fit to come to the hearing. They didn't see fit to offer any input. The kind of revenue they are trying to generate now through a lottery has nothing to do with essential city services, not the operation of the government, not to give a salary to policemen or firemen. None of those things that they talked to you about is that lottery designed to produce money for. So if they are going to go into these extra methods of quasi taxation, if they are going to get the money, then it seems like they could justify getting better by saying it is essential and necessary for the city's operation. I am opposed to Senator Goodrich's motion but I think if you cannot stand under the pressure, if you lack the courage to stick by the vote that you gave when this amendment was adopted, then you ought to let that be shown now and