

impact that could occur in other areas by that reduction in the financial support for schools, for MRDs or any number of other things. I indicated to Senator Koch I didn't intend to make a big issue of this. I feel strongly personally that this is not good policy and it is a judgment call. I could not support the amendment or the motion to be placed as a constitutional amendment on the ballot and I feel I must make a motion to indefinitely postpone.

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: The Chair recognizes Senator Keyes. Senator Keyes. All right, Senator Simon.

SENATOR SIMON: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the Warner motion to indefinitely postpone. Senator Warner, I share many of the concerns which you have raised. As a member of the Revenue Committee, I have worked and I have introduced one bill, I have a taxation bill which I believe would help to alleviate some of the problems of homeowners and we spent quite a bit of time in committee, as I am sure you are aware, in terms of trying to come up with a more equalized formula so that everybody pays their fair share of the property taxes and certainly the property tax is the most regressive of all taxes. It is the one that is the least fair. It is based least on the ability to pay. Anything this body can do to help try and ease that burden on the average homeowner, I feel is important. At the same time, Senator Warner, I think that you have overlooked what the basic intent and what LB 469 would do and I think that is what Senator Koch pointed out and let me just explore that a little bit further. Senator Warner, if you would travel into downtown Omaha, and perhaps it has been sometime since you and some of the other senators have done so, you'd find that it is not like it used to be. I can remember as a kid driving down there or riding down in a streetcar and seeing the downtown area hustling and bustling and seeing all the businesses thriving. That is not the case in downtown Omaha today. Many businesses have pulled out. There are vacant storefronts. It is something that as a native Omahan I find very tragic and it is very disappointing everytime I go down there to see that. The number of businesses down there has decreased substantially and the fact remains that if Omaha is to prosper and to thrive that something has to be done to the downtown area. Otherwise, we are just going to continue to deteriorate to the point where all the business will expand westward, and once that downtown area has deteriorated sufficiently, then we are going to have a very serious problem even more so than we have now. Now there are many alternatives, I think, towards trying to regenerate and to revitalize the downtown area. I think certainly one of those is LB 469, the tax increment financing method. Senator Warner, I think the point is this that with LB 469, as Senator Koch has pointed out, in those areas that have utilized this type of method, those areas have grown and they have prospered to the point where they have increased the business production, that they have brought in new business and industry, that they have broadened the tax base, and while eventually or while initially perhaps there might be a slight pinch, I don't feel there would be any increased burden on the individual homeowner. But certainly in the long run what we are talking about is to be able to bring a substantial increase of revenue into the City of Omaha and that also means into the State of Nebraska and I think that