

all, it's true that the federal government is cutting back on a number of its programs, and it's true I think that the IRS has cut back on, for example, the kinds of issue that NIFA is allowed to issue to help...to help with home ownership, but everything that's happening at the federal level is symptomatic of the problem, that is what I perceive to be the problem, at least, and that is that we've overextended ourselves badly in trying to help a lot more people than we really have the ability to help, and we've overextended ourselves like that in part because of the nature of the political process. We tried to buy into the groups' substantial political support, such as homebuilders, and realtors, and other people who benefit, frankly, from these kinds of programs as well as the ultimate consumer benefitting. And in order to draw those into the political alliance, we end up giving benefits to what are, essentially, people that you and I would consider middle class. At least if you divide us up into thirds, people in the middle class are benefitting under this kind of a program. In fact, people in the upper class could benefit under the green copy of the bill as it is because...the people of the upper class couldn't, but people of the middle class probably could, very likely would, under the way the bill is defined. But I would ask you to think for a minute about what affordable housing means. If I'm in the category where I can pay \$400 a month for rent and there is no other housing available, period, I can't drop down to a lower level, then there is no affordable housing for me. If, on the other hand, I'm making \$30,000 a year and I can afford to pay 6 or 7 hundred dollars in rent, the house that I want may not be affordable to me, but there is going to be some level of housing that I can afford, that I can come down to, and that's the way the economic system works generally. And I think that that is the way we should allow it to operate except at the very lowest level. And, again, that's why I suggest to you that really the words "affordable housing" only having meaning with respect to those who otherwise would not be able to get any housing whatsoever. I don't think that small towns are disadvantaged in any way by my suggestion of an amendment and I wanted to point out to you that some of the other standards that we have, for example, with medical care and also with transportation also use the standard or mark of 150 percent of the federal poverty level. So what I'm trying to do is move towards a uniform standard because, after all, it's...it's all income together and all expenses together that we really need to be concerned about...