

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 10, 1999 LB 202

park; it can be anything from picking up the litter in a vacant lot, perhaps turning it into a park; it can be about fixing up the small community baseball field. The number of programs or the number of activities that can be carried out by this grant program is limited only by the imagination of the people in the small communities and the neighborhoods that are the ones that ultimately carry out the work of improving the life of their neighbors. And so again I would ask the support of the Legislature for this amendment.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I rise in support of both the bill and the amendment. I believe that the amendment would specifically encourage small and medium-sized towns to identify neighborhoods for community betterment, and allow them to just organize amongst themselves with innovative ideas. And coming from local government, I believe that this is needed. People come with ideas and often times funding is the primary obstacle. Just briefly to the bill, I like what it did for a Panhandle project that's called the Youth Entrepreneurship Project, it was a grant for \$22,500 that was...that created a revolving loan fund. So not only did it create a one-time project, but those funds are available on a revolving basis and encourages young people to come up with business plans and ideas that really create great life skills for the future. So I would encourage everyone to vote for the amendment and the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I have to echo what Senator Wehrbein said about having to make hard choices. And I want everyone to understand that this is not that...something that says that this kind of activity is not a good activity. But we also have to look at what we already have in place in the state, and what we're doing to help communities and rural areas and urban areas already. And in the Department of Economic Development's budget, \$37 million of the budget goes out in aid. And some of those grants are in small grants. Not all of it goes out in huge grants. And so it's not like we don't have some mechanism to provide incentive to local