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FLOOR DEBATE

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from getting into the business. I think that would have overwhelming support in the Legislature. I think there are any number of people who would vote for that and that piece, by itself, I think probably would get a very high number of votes. Let me tell you one of the reasons why I'm going to vote against this bill. This bill says that, to the extent there are public entities, they're going to need to unload this cable and, if they lease it, the money that they get for the leasing above their costs goes into a fund and it goes out to help Internet around the state. Senator Jones stood up and said this was good for rural Nebraska. I think Senator Vrtiska said...did the same thing; said the bill is good for rural Nebraska. And we know where that money is going to come from and what a shock you've seen Lincoln senators standing up and objecting to the bill because we've got cable and if there's going to be leasing it's going to come from us. The money is coming from us, so we're self-interested in here. And I think Senator Vrtiska and Senator Jones and my rural colleagues, many of whom voted against the Robak motion most recently, would say this bill is good for rural Nebraska. Well, Internet access would be good for rural Nebraska, I don't...I don't dispute that, but the problem is this. This bill creates a fund of essentially Lincoln or urban money, gives it for Internet enhancement, which is a great goal, but it doesn't go for Internet enhancement. It goes to local telephone companies and it goes to them without regard to what those telephone companies are now doing. We're going to take urban money and we're going to send it out without regard to the telephone companies out in the rural areas and let me tell you that there are 17 of them out there that are not part of our Universal Service Fund. Now my data is old. I'm going to read you some old data here, but the Plainview Telephone Company makes about a 17 percent profit a year. They're a monopoly and they get a 17 percent profit and we're going to send them Lincoln money and that's going to be good for rural Nebraska. Senator Vrtiska is going to think that's just great. Get a monopoly, a government created monopoly, give them 17 percent profit and then take money from the urban areas and send it to them. That's going to be good for rural Nebraska. Now, in Stanton, the telephone company makes 20 percent profit and we're going to send them urban money for Internet enhancement even though they're making 20 percent profit a year,