

April 25, 1979

LB 495

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Dworak.

SENATOR DWORAK: Mr. President and colleagues. I rise in support of Senator Fowler's amendment. I am a customer of cable TV in Columbus. We have had some problems in the past, we get these rate increases in the mail without any advance notification whatsoever. The public has very little input into the type of service that we get. There is a new phenomena that is developing in communities across this state in that certain neighborhoods are now zoned where you can't even have a tower. There is nothing wrong with that you still have a choice of whether you want to go into that neighborhood or not, but if you do go in the neighborhood then you are really captive to the cable company. There is nothing wrong with that either, but the public does have a stake in this and the public does have an interest. There should be some kind of mechanism where the public has input into rates, into the services offered by these cable companies. I think that I also have a lot of confidence in local governments but local governments like state government have a myriad of problems and issues and things that confront them and this probably in the overall context of their workload isn't the most significant thing that they look at in the process of a year or two years or five years. I think that this forced public awareness is not a bad thing in this particular area. I think that this is a good amendment and I think that it makes the bill stronger, more workable and I think that it's really in the benefit of behalf of the people of the State of Nebraska.

PRESIDENT: Seeing no other speakers, Senator Haberman you may close on your motion. Senator Haberman you may close on your motion or do you not care to close?

SENATOR HABERMAN: The city councils now have the authority to set the rates. The city councils represent the people in each of their city. I feel that the local citizens, by talking to their city councils, can influence what they would like to have. The amendments specifically say that two public hearings must be held just on cable TV rates. If this is such a serious matter why do we only hold one public hearing on the entire city budget? I feel that this is an encroachment upon the city councils. I feel that they have the integrity. They know the situation on a local basis better than we do. We have not had any hue and outcry from the citizens. So, I would ask that you do not adopt the Fowler amendment.

PRESIDENT: Question before the House is the motion to return LB 495. All those in favor vote aye, those opposed vote nay.