

leave that in the hands of the zoning and the cities where they are being built or where they are going in. If this fails, irregardless of whether this fails or not, I have an amendment up there that would put the authority in the hands of the zoning committee and the city council, whatever size the city is. So I really think we are here again taking authority away from the cities that they should maintain. So I do not oppose Senator Venditte's amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wesely, then Senator DeCamp, then Senator Labeledz, then Senator Wagner. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I oppose the Venditte amendment and motion. I believe that the problems that he has identified and which Senator Nichol just mentioned are problems which I don't think are really justified with this bill. The bill is a necessary bill because we have had problems across the state with concentrations of group homes. We have had it in Lincoln. We have had it in Omaha. It is going to take a state law I think to distribute these group homes across the state and then within individual communities, make sure that within those communities, they are not concentrated and this takes state action I believe. I think that we have tried to work with the Municipal Leagues, we have tried to work with the City of Omaha and the bill as introduced by Senator Sieck was not acceptable to Omaha, but in the Public Health and Welfare Committee, we spent a lot of time working with these individuals from Omaha and other cities, the Municipal League. We worked out compromises. We worked on an amended version of LB 525 which is before you today and we find that it was acceptable to all parties and now we are finding, all of a sudden, that there are some concerns that weren't there before and I don't think those concerns really have been thought out clearly because this bill does not step on the toes of Omaha. We did meet the sort of requirements they have now and incorporate those into the bill. It doesn't really change the situation in Omaha because it did have a good ordinance, a fairly good ordinance. It didn't help a problem that was there previously in terms of concentration of group homes but still it was a fairly good situation and so this bill incorporates those sort of goals and there is no problem with Omaha, and the situation about overriding local authority, in this instance I think it is justified and I think the bill as it sits today before you is a good bill. There is no need for the Venditte amendment or any other amendment. Thank you.