

am inclined to agree with Senator Wesely when he says we were better off before we started this but I would like to take it one step further. We were better off before that bill was drafted.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Cullan. Senator Cullan. Senator Stoney.

SENATOR STONEY: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I rise in support of the Wesely amendment. I think it is nothing more than an accountability amendment. Now every year in this Legislature when we have tax takers that come before the Appropriations Committee, they attempt to justify what they are requiring from the state in the way of a budget. What we have done with LB 499 is to erode the tax base by providing a group, whatever the Chamber of Commerce might be throughout the State of Nebraska, an opportunity to decide how these funds should be expended for the promotion of tourism here in the State of Nebraska and, yes, I understand that it must have the approval of the county board but I think that you will find, and if you are a resident, you will know that whatever those decisions are that are reached by those Chambers of Commerce will be ultimately approved by the county board with very, very little scrutiny. Now in my own opinion, if I had an opportunity to amend this bill, I would have preferred that all the dollars went to the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of Economic Development but I know that this is an absurdity because the bill has sufficient votes to pass. Senator Wesely with his amendment once again is providing this body with an opportunity to require accountability on the parts of those individuals who will expend these funds for tourism. I feel very, very comfortable with those individuals who will be spending these dollars for them to come on an annual basis before the Legislature's Appropriation Committee and justify what those expenditures will be. I would ask for your support of the Wesely amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wesely, do you wish to close on your amendment? Senator Wesely, do you wish to close on your amendment?

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Senator Stoney's words and they echo my feelings. I understand Senator DeCamp's feeling about this change after he has worked so hard to try to get the bill in the shape that it is in but I really do think that we have gone astray a bit from some of the concerns that we have had about this