

March 23, 1981

LB 39

Senator Kahle wishes that to be decreased to ten percent, and even at that level at ten percent we are talking about a greater contribution by the counties in Nebraska than practically any other state in the country. So it is very clear that comparatively speaking this is a good step to take. Also you should know that there is a bill in the Public Health Committee dealing with the question of who should administer the welfare program in the state. LB 522 would change that from the county-state system which we now have to a total state system. That indicates, I think, the concern that Senator Kahle is addressing in LB 39, which is the counties although they do pay a substantial amount of the cost of this program have very little say about the program. That effort to make it a state program indicates the fact that the state basically is the one responsible for this program and should take it over and administer it. Likewise, I think the state should take a greater responsibility in funding the program and at ten percent although that is going to cost the state more money, clearly it is the state's responsibility to meet this need. I think that clearly with the skyrocketing health care costs which we are seeing in the State of Nebraska and elsewhere in the country, there is a great need to deal with the overall question of health cost containment. The state is picking up every year perhaps twenty million more dollars in taxpayers' money that is going to support this medical assistance program which is going without too much attention by this body. What that indicates is the state is spending a lot of tax dollars in health care costs. We need to do something about that. We do have some legislation dealing with that area that I think is very important. But at this time dealing with the specific question of county support for the Medicaid program clearly it is in the best interest of the state to lower that commitment by the counties, reduce it to ten percent and perhaps in the future reduce it more. I know Senator Schmit has a bill on revenue sharing that would do the same thing. So across the board we are seeing...the indication is clear LB 39 is a step in the right direction and should be supported.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Von Minden. We are speaking to the advancement of the bill.

SENATOR VON MINDEN: Mr. Chairman and members of the body, I rise in support of LB 39. Being a past County Commissioner the past six years, the counties feel that that was the most unfair tax we have to meet. We don't have anything to say about it and it is...one of the hardest