

the last couple of years and even with the 2% reduction that we have had in the last two years from 20% to 18% and then from 18% to 16% most counties have still not kept up. They have still had to increase more than the 7% in order to pay those bills that they get from the state for that medicaid payment. Even with those two years behind us, now if you are talking about taking it off completely this next year and still leaving the state the counties on a 7% lid you are going to choke every program they have off out there. I have got a piece out of the World Herald that came out yesterday morning, "61% of the county bridges are in need of repairs". Some of them critically in need of repairs. Here is a program that started out I think generally to be federally funded. The state got involved in it, why Nebraska was allotted a 20% part of that payment no one really knows, no other states around us has that but we did have it, we got it down to 16% and even with those, as I mentioned before, those drops, for instance last year Box Butte County had a 31% increase, Buffalo a 23% increase, Cass 15%, Custer 21%, Furnas 59%, Sarpy 39%, which are just a few cut across the State of Nebraska. Of course the pitch of the whole thing is that the county has absolutely no control of that. They get a bill and that is the end of it. The state does have some control. We have more welfare programs in Nebraska than any state around us, or just as many, and a lot more than most. If the state is so concerned about the welfare program, as Senator Warner mentioned, why don't they do something about it? I visited with the Governor a couple of weeks ago about this and he said, lets do it. But the counties can't do it, the state has to do it. So I plead with you, don't kill this bill. It will be devastating for the counties, especially if we continue to have a 7% lid. If we don't have the 7% lid it will sure give the tax payers of real estate, on real estate tax a terrific crack in the chops. So if the state can't handle this the counties certainly can not. Senator Warner said that this would be the argument and it certainly is. We can't do a thing about it at the county level. The state can't do a whole lot about it but they can certainly do more than the county and if the federal government makes some changes the state can certainly react better than the counties can. I urge you not to kill LB 39E. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President, members of the body, I'd have to rise to oppose the motion that Senator Warner has