

depend on the development of area plans. Each area agency would develop a plan as to how it would extend services and maintain its current services. It would then be up to the State Commission on Aging and to the Legislature as to whether or not to fund those increases. If the funds are not provided then they would be prorated back and we would then expect that the counties would not extend the services because they would not have the resources. Point number one that came across is, some parts of Nebraska have services, others do not but would like to have them. Point number two was that we already have, as I say, services and it is about a 9 million dollar program. But if you were to look in state law as to the definition of the Commission on Aging, all you would find is a short description of an advisory group to the Governor that really does not have the sorts of powers that it is now exercising and there is no mention of area agencies or any of the framework that is established to provide services. Therefore, we felt that it was time to set up, as Senator Wesely described it, a mechanism, an agreement, a partnership, a contract between all the participants as to what responsibility is theirs, what responsibility is ours. And so, LB 404 tries to balance the local desires for control with the state desire for quality and to try and balance the funding so that it is an equal partnership. The third point that came across time and time again is that not having these services, not having these services can be more expensive than having the services. That may seem strange in a way but there is testimony given throughout the state that oftentimes the only alternative to these types of services is a nursing home and that twenty-four hour institutional care is far more expensive than partial provision of a meal, of transportation that would enable someone to stay in their own home. There is testimony from a person in Madison, Nebraska, who runs a nursing care facility and she said, I have seen a difference in the people that we have been asked to admit to the nursing homes since congregate meals came to Madison. I no longer have families coming to me saying they have a loved one who has become confused and listless and they do not have a physical reason for placement. In the past those people could no longer stay in the home. Since congregate meals this is not happening. Congregate meals, senior diner programs, made it possible for several people to stay at home longer and to leave our beds at the nursing home for those who really need them and are actually ill. At the Hastings hearing, George Clayton of Grand Island has testified and he has worked at these programs a long time. He indicates that, if we can get these people out and keep them involved in our programs by nutrition on wheels and keep them in their own homes where they belong, why, from a financial standpoint we know we are going to save money.