

April 30, 1981

LB 559

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Fowler. (Microphone not on)... on the Schmit amendment.

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I find myself in a somewhat awkward position because I have a great deal of sympathy for picking up the lost federal funds in this case and in many other cases that we are going to be facing. And I guess in the Appropriations Committee we felt that this year in the budget limits that were established we could only pick up federal funds in a few areas. Now if the Legislature as a whole wishes to follow Senator Schmit's lead in this area, and the coalition of Pirsch, Chambers, Hoagland and Schmit, an unprecedented coalition, I might add, if that coalition can, in fact, pull this off I think it will be a message at least to the Appropriations Committee that we should not be as reluctant to pick up federal funds, that we should look at the needs, the lobbying pressures even, the demands for these services before we adopt a blanket policy. In the Health and Human Service and Education areas there are going to be major cuts, and perhaps if this Legislature feels that these funds need to be restored from tax dollars, rather than us assuming that burden, what we should do is send a message back to Washington not to cut the funds in the first place. It would be a simpler solution. It wouldn't require that the state pick these areas up, and perhaps Senator Schmit and Pirsch and Hoagland and Chambers would join the resolution back to Washington urging that the states not be asked to assume these, that these are worthwhile programs, that we feel that they are essential services, valuable services, they shouldn't be cut in the first place. They shouldn't be cut for Oklahoma. They shouldn't be cut for Ohio. They shouldn't be cut for Pennsylvania as well as Nebraska. As a member of the committee, given the seven percent budget that we had to work with, we were not able to pick up these funds. But if the Legislature feels that that should be the policy of the Legislature to do so, I would hope that you would support us in that effort next year in the Health, Human Services and Education areas.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, first of all I would like to tell Senator Fowler that not only would I join in a resolution if the Legislature would pay my way both ways, I would go to Washington and speak very strongly in behalf of noncutting of federal funds to programs that are worthwhile. But in the same way that we would say that the Reagan administration ought not just take a meat axe and say we are going to lop a certain amount off various selected programs regardless of the overall