

it has reduced some of the functions in the local offices. The local office becomes effectively an intake office. But it doesn't provide the whole panoply and range of welfare services that every local office now has to provide. Instead, the full range of services are provided out of regional offices. Iowa up until recently has had 16 regional offices. Again, let me remind you the Social Security program in this state, which administers benefits to a quarter of a million of our citizens does that out of eleven offices. That is not too bad in terms of being able to administer major benefits to a lot of folks out of a few number of offices. We know that there are enormous changes occurring in human services programs at the federal level and I think that we need to place our state in a position so it can respond to those kinds of changes. I think the first step we have to do is to assure the State of Nebraska that it has got full administrative authority over the welfare function, which as you well know is a very broad spectrum function. If the welfare department is placed in a position where it really always has to see how each county board will go along, will go along with its various decisions, it will have a hard time really adapting to the federal changes that are occurring now. I have been assured time and time again by John Knight, the former Director of the Department of Welfare, that this change alone will effect economies. There are some natural economies in being able to administer welfare on a statewide basis where we don't have to have the same level of operation in each county office. Then of course, finally, there is the ultimate issue, the ultimate issue of basic property tax relief to those persons throughout the State of Nebraska who have to pay their property taxes to support, in part, the welfare function. Once the state fully takes over the welfare function it will be costed solely to sales and income tax and obviously will have the ability of effecting some kind of property tax relief. The amount of relief depends upon . . .

PRESIDENT: Half a minute, Senator Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: . . .but this in my opinion is one of the solid welfare reform measures to come before the body. I don't think that it is going to cruelly hurt poor people. I think that it is going to be efficient for our state. I think that it is going to provide us some economies. Finally I know that it is going to effect some degree of property tax relief in rural Nebraska and in urban Nebraska and it is an important bill and it is truly one that should be advanced to Final Reading and then passed into law. Finally, let me say one thing. It still doesn't become effective until July 1, 1983. If by July 1, 1983 there has