

SENATOR NEWELL: Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I would like to also oppose the DeCamp amendment. This is the first time in four years in the Legislature that I have spoken on this particular issue although it has been troublesome to me all along. But I wanted to go back and be sure I think everybody understands clearly what happened when this original deal was made on personal property tax exemption but I'm not sure that everybody understands the double benefit that accrued to the people in the outstate counties. First of all, when property, personal property was exempted by law those who benefitted by that exemption or by those exemption most were the taxpayers, the personal property taxpayers basically in rural areas. So that was their first benefit. They benefitted the most but then what do we do? We turn around and benefit the rural taxpayer the most a second time by manipulating the redistribution formula in favor of those same counties. So a double benefit accrues to those particular taxpayers if you'll look at it in terms of taxpayers. So the businessman in Omaha, for example, who was not benefitted as much by the exemptions in the first instance and then that same businessman is asked to take more money out of his pocket to help those who receive the bigger exemptions and I can see no justice in that kind of logic whatsoever. But if that is bad, consider the urban wage earner. He benefitted very little or not at all from the original exemptions and the burden on him is then doubled. He makes up the taxes that were exempted in his local area, the businessmen and the farmers who were exempted, he makes up those taxes. Then in addition the wage earner turns around and pays out more of his taxes to the outstate counties to help them make up for the exemptions so that the urban wage earner is hit twice real hard by that original deal and from the point of view of the urban wage earner, that original deal can be characterized as nothing less than a swindle. The total state aid to Lincoln, Lancaster County, we were ninety-second out of ninety-three counties despite the fact that we pay a much, much higher percentage of the sales and income taxes. 10% of the people live here and yet we are treated like the ninety-second county. So my point is simply this, that there was no justice in the original formula whatsoever. So now looking at how the money should be distributed, what is the philosophy that this Legislature should adopt? What are the philosophies that you can adopt that makes sense? It seems to me that the only one that makes any kind of sense is to give back to the counties in state aid approximately what those counties pay in in state and income taxes, state sales and income taxes. But this is the way it should be,