

is a good process, but within that process, there is really no place for the local property taxpayer, for the individual that is paying these I think immorally high property taxes. What happens is the state government agencies get their say, get their dollars into the budget, and by the time we get around to passing the final budget, there is little if any room left for enhancing the image, the situation of our local property taxpayers. What this motion does is simply brings this bill to General File for immediate consideration. Some people will argue that it will not have had a public hearing, but I would argue with you that we have had so many hearings on the property tax problem in this state, every year we have bills to relieve property taxes. Last year, Senator Vard Johnson's tax study committee did hearings all over the state and the one consistent message they heard back was that property taxes need to be reduced. We don't need a public hearing to be told that we need to do something about property taxes. To leave this bill, to let it run its current course of action will, in all probability, doom it to failure, will doom us, as a Legislature, to fund the needs of state government programs, to deal with those types of problems, and once again to forget the problems of the local property taxpayer. I would point out that the budget that is being considered by the Appropriations Committee as sent over by the Governor...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...has nothing in it for property tax relief. I think it will be valuable this morning to have this debate and this discussion on the priorities to which this Legislature gives to property tax problems. I think we have failed the property taxpayer in my time in the Legislature. I have tried not to fail them, but as a Legislature, we have. I think it is time that we went on record as a Legislature of supporting property tax relief. This is an opportunity that you have as a Legislature to do so. I would urge you to be one of the 30 votes needed to suspend the rules to have this bill placed on General File. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Senator Withem. Before proceeding to an amendment on the desk, a motion on the desk, the Chair is pleased to announce that Senator Kristensen has a guest in the north balcony, from Kearney, Nebraska, the Director of the Social Services Department at Kearney, Bev Muller. Would you please stand and take a bow, Bev. Thank you. We are glad to