

the county from at large to district. Senator Labeledz offered an amendment for the Douglas County Board which gutted the committee amendment and said that you would leave the number of commissioners at five, instead of raising it to seven, nominate them by district and elect them at large. It made no provision for moving from an at large system to a district system. It is not a well-crafted amendment, technically speaking, but that is not my major opposition to it. It changes completely the thrust of the bill. I had handed out some material earlier which showed how large populationwise Douglas County is. With a seven person board, there would still be close to 100,000 people, or 80,000 in each district, and that would be a large amount to cover in an election. The way the county board has been put together, and the way it has operated on an at large basis has made it amenable to those who have name recognition and money. There are portions of the county, and particularly Omaha, which do not have representation on the board as it's constituted now. If you will consider the Ak-Sar-Ben question, it was something that was fomented by the present chairman of the Douglas County Board. At least two legislative districts in the City of Omaha that would have been affected, Senator Lindsay's and my own, and others, but ours quite a bit, were given no consideration. Were we not in this Legislature placed here through a district system, the concerns of those areas would not have been represented here. It is clear that those on the county board, right now, take decisions that don't consider all parts of the county, and especially the City of Omaha. As the discussion progresses, I'm going to have a handout given to you which will show where the county board itself is saying that they are moving away from being a low profile administrative type agency, they're going to engage in more initiatives. They're going to be more active. And some people see it as a move which ultimately could engulf the City of Omaha, which is the largest city in the county. If that happens, the county, in fact, becomes the governing body of Omaha, and the city council is reduced to a virtual administrative position. So in order to prevent that from happening, there should be representation of all of the interests that the county board is going to govern. There is a substantial minority population in the City of Omaha, which is a part of Douglas County, that has never been represented on the board. As a matter of fact, it never had representation on the city council until we went to districts. When districts were provided for by the Legislature, not only was there a black member on the city council, but he was elected to president of the council by his colleagues. So the concept