

Senator Wesely. Senator Schmit. Senator Wesely, please, followed by Senator Baack.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members, I would rise once again in opposition to this amendment. We have offered several alternatives. Senator Conway talked about moving these field officers in with existing NBDC offices. That failed. I offered the idea of having the NBDCs themselves have more staffing so that we have actual expertise placed out in rural Nebraska. That failed. Senator Scofield talked about the idea of moving this into the smaller towns out in the areas unserved by DED. That failed. We have offered alternative after alternative about how this can be improved and it has been rejected by this body. I am suggesting now we turn around and reject this very amendment. It is the wrong course of action, it is the wrong thing to do. There are better ideas out there, you've turned them down, but let me tell you they are, in fact, much better ways to go about the idea of providing assistance out to the rural areas of our state. These regional offices, as I've said before...

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Please, ladies and gentlemen, let's hold it down. We're awfully noisy today. We'd really appreciate it. Thank you.

SENATOR WESELY: These regional offices have a history. Now, Senator Bernard-Stevens, you've not been here very long, but maybe if you had been you'd understand better what exactly the situation is here. We had field offices. They were used as public relations offices for the Governor's office, and that was back at a time when Governor Kerrey first came in and we closed those things down. They were not functioning like they should. They had been perverted and converted into public relations offices, not economic development offices and that's why we shut those down and that's why so many of us with that experience don't want to see them come back. Now maybe in the right time and the right place and the right fashion we can reconstruct that sort of idea, but it was abused, it was abused back then and we stopped that abuse and this Legislature said we're not going to let that continue and that's why we're fighting so hard to stop it from happening again because that's exactly what will happen again if we don't watch it.

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Please, ladies and gentlemen, let's hold it down, please. Senator Wesely.