

This bill providing \$1 million is only a first step. It's not going to solve all of the problems, but it's a good faith effort to create a credible program that people can take some confidence in or place confidence in. If you will look at the committee statement, you will notice the number of the larger businesses having sent representatives down here to speak for the bill, even the Chamber of Commerce. To be honest, I feel somewhat uncomfortable in that company, but when you have a good idea it draws a lot of different interests together. Last summer various businesses in Omaha collected seven hundred and something thousand dollars that they spent for recreational purposes. Nothing wrong with that. I'm glad that they did. But this offers something more substantial, something of permanence because it creates a fund from which loans can be made to produce businesses. Those businesses are not all going to succeed, but the ones which do will pay back what they owe plus whatever the interest rate happens to be depending on the amount of risk entailed with the loan and that money will be available for others. So I'm hoping that this bill will move forward. The other day Senator Hefner and I were on an amendment and he had said that if our being on that amendment caused a snowstorm, so be it, and the next thing that would complete it was for him to see the Governor and I on something. Senator Hefner, that day has arrived. I hope you will support this bill and if you have any questions, I'm prepared to answer them.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Ashford, please, followed by Senator Wesely.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I stand in strong support of Senator Chambers' bill and it is interesting to observe this grand alliance that has been forged between Senator Chambers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Governor and maybe others in this body, but I really, in reviewing the bills that have come before us this year and the new proposals, I guess this one from the beginning of the session struck me as the most interesting and maybe the most significant of all the bills that we dealt with, at least for Omaha. The two things that I think are of interest to me, one is that it is a program which can be sustained. So many times we dump efforts, certainly, and to some degree, money into areas of the city that need economic development and then walk, to some extent, walk away from those projects within a short period of time after they start. And this bill has a sustaining function which, or a