

believe we've taken care of the primary concern that defeated LR 21 when it came up a few years ago and this particular measure now I think is ready to be advanced. It is ready to be passed; it is ready to be submitted to the people of Nebraska so that they can decide this fall if, in fact, they agree with our judgment as a Legislature that it is, in fact, appropriate to allow local funds to be used to fund economic or industrial development projects. This is an important measure for small towns and large cities for that matter in this state. Right now, as we've talked about before, the circumstances that prevail, frankly, are one of fierce competition out there not only within our state among communities, but across state lines. As I indicated on the kill motion earlier, we are the only state that has the kind of prohibitions in our Constitution that currently limit the kinds of activities that our communities can engage in. The competition out there for the dwindling federal funds is intense and I would predict, unfortunately, that probably that dwindling is going to continue given the need for the federal government to balance its budget. It seems that they have a propensity to look at funds that benefit local governments and our current situation, you will recall Senator Schmit making statements earlier about what's going on with community development block grant funds. Omaha currently gets \$4.6 million, Lincoln gets \$3.9 million just as entitlements and that leaves a separate allocation of \$9.7 million which all the other communities in the state literally go in and scrap over to try to accomplish economic development. Their range of tools are very, very limited. Their opportunities to help themselves are very, very limited and so by voting to put this on the ballot, this gives our communities a chance to compete fairly with those communities and other states who are out there trying to get the same kind of business we're trying to get. For instance, in Chadron right now we're quite hopeful that we may have a wheat milling operation, probably we'll use some corn as well to do ethanol development and other products related to that. This is a tool that that community could use. This is a tool that communities across the state can use to boost what is a dwindling property tax base in this state. It seems to me that there are some concerns being raised out there about well, gee, can the local taxpayer really decide if they want to do this? If you really believe that the best decisions are made close to home, if you really trust the people who sent you down here, I would suggest that you ought to give them this kind of authority as I don't think that it's as likely to see wild spending occur at the local level or bad decisions made as