

same regard. First of all, the age-old arguments opposed to branch banking, we have passed on this floor this session several bills which ought to have negated all of the arguments against branch banking. We have, for all practical purposes, statewide branching, virtually unlimited. We have made it possible for a bank to purchase an S & L and/or branch or failing institution, they can do almost anything. What we propose to do here is to allow, in certain areas, some limited expansion of branch banking. The question then is why. I have been told because these particular counties need this kind of service. I'll be very frank and honest with you, if I had my choice I would just as soon it were statewide branching, or adjacent county branching. I would like very much for the bank in Bellwood to be able to place a facility in the City of Omaha, because very frankly it's a small bank, it's a bank which today is servicing a large number of customers and which may need...and does need additional capital. We have, in David City, a branch of an Omaha bank, and we have a merger with FirstTier. As I have said earlier, when I carried bills for the past 15 or 16 years that changed the structure of banking in Nebraska, I was assured and reassured that agriculture and industry and individuals would be taken care of. Well, ladies and gentlemen, one of the reasons why we changed the structure of banking in Nebraska is because the traditional sources of credit did not take care of those needs. I just spent this morning with Larry Bare and Morrie Reynolds, two gentlemen with whom Mr. Moore is very well acquainted, and discussed with them some of the aspects of the NIFA program. For all practical purposes the NIFA program on housing is working well. In all honesty, the program of industrial loans is not working very well. And, in all honesty, the program designed to assist agriculture is not working at all. And it is not necessarily because of the fault of the individuals who are involved over there, it is because of the fault of some of the restrictions placed upon the law by this institution, over my objections, back in the 19...middle eighties. It is a fact, because of some of the restrictions placed in the law by the Congress, which is an anti-agriculture Congress in most respects. And I would just like to say that the bill we have here today provides for additional competition, provides for resources for those three counties, and eventually, I think, will...and I'm sure my friend, Kurt Yost out there, is jumping up and down and saying I told you so, but eventually will provide the basis as to why there needs to be more competition all across the state. Any one in the country can go into competition with me, farming,