

hurting or helping the housing issues that we face? We need to look at the institutional structure...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...that we have, the private industry, the nonprofit organizations, the public agencies involved, who are they, what are they doing; look at coordination and cooperation of that delivery system for meeting housing needs, identify the lead agency to coordinate these plans, which it looks to be Policy Research. And, again, I just went through essentially what we're looking at, I think those are questions that need to be answered, they are problems we need to address. I would appreciate very much your opposition to the Moore amendment. And, if you're concerned about the costs, we can deal with that. But I think the housing study, the housing issue needs to be addressed.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Chambers, please, followed by Senator Schimek. We're speaking about the Moore amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I'm opposed to Senator Moore's amendment. Having lived in Omaha all of my life, having over that time span watched the deterioration in housing currently occupied by people who are poor, watching housing that was owned by people outside of the community being allowed to deteriorate, and no renter is going to pay to renovate the house that belongs to somebody else, so these absentee landlords do not keep up the property. When they fall below code requirements and the people are forced to leave because the structure is going to be condemned, many times they stay, they continue to stand. They're not boarded up, they're not made secure. Recently, there have been a rash...there has been a rash of arson fires which not only destroy that property or half destroy it, making an eyesore and creating a hazard, because it's a gathering place for rats, roaches and other vermin, some of the two-legged variety, it is...these houses are attractive nuisances for young people. Some have become the hangouts for those who want to live or are compelled to live on the other side of the law. So, as long as there is no state policy, no direction, other than what occurs at the city level, a problem as severe as that in Omaha is never going to be addressed, let alone solved. Currently, there is a dispute in Omaha between the Omaha City Council and the Housing Authority because there is what looks like an encampment or prison