

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I'm going to try to be brief. Senator Labeledz gave one of the weakest arguments against this bill I've ever heard. It's something that Jim Moylan has been talking about to me ever since I introduced the bill. Now, first of all, Senator Labeledz knows that the Omaha City Council deals with a smaller area and smaller population than the Douglas County Board. There are seven members on the Omaha City Council. The school board represents a smaller area and smaller district, and there are 12 members on the Omaha School Board. I handed around to you a copy of the statement of intent that I gave to the committee, because it points out the number of counties already in this state that have seven members. Twenty-seven counties have seven members, all of them have far less population than Douglas County. With seven members, each district will contain roughly 58 to 60,000 people. Senator Labeledz has always opposed districts, always. But here's the point to realize, the majority of county boards in Nebraska elect by district, district is the method by which these elections occur. Another thing that you ought to keep in mind is that we have eleven co-sponsors on this bill, eleven, practically every senator from the Omaha area, and I would include Bud Robinson, because he signed on, too, support this bill to elect seven members by district, you nominate by district and elect. So I'm asking that you defeat, vote no on Senator Labeledz's amendment, because the only purpose is really to try to cloud the issue and ultimately defeat the bill. And Jim Moylan made it clear that he'd fight me every step of the way, and I understand that, he's a lobbyist for the county board. But what you all need to pay attention to, and I think Senator Schellpeper was kind of stung, this county board, in conjunction with the Douglas County Fair Board, has done things that are so questionable that one of the commissioners asked for an investigation by the Douglas County Attorney. To pretend that the county board does not do things that affect all people in the county is ridiculous. Talking about purchasing Ak-Sar-Ben certainly is of concern to more than the small area represented by the cluster of current Douglas County Commissioners. They're all clustered, except for Warren Buffett's son, in one part of the city, and that's southwest Omaha, where the rich people live. There is virtually no representation in the rest of the county. And when we, at the committee, were reviewing this bill Commissioner Rosenblatt made one of the most asinine, vicious, racist, sexist statements that could be made, but I will touch on that when we get to the bill.