

Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to support this amendment and, Senator Hall and Senator Landis, you know it is wrong to propose an amendment like we had in the Revenue Committee amendment without giving them a public hearing. Here we are blindsiding them and I don't think that is fair. If Senator Hall and Senator Landis want to introduce a bill, that is fine. Give the newspapers a chance to voice their opinion, to defend themselves, and I am going to defend them on the floor like I did in Revenue Committee. I am not going to talk too much about the dailies, like the Lincoln Journal, or the World-Herald, or the Norfolk Daily News, or the Columbus paper, or some of those. I am going to talk about the small weekly newspapers. I have 14 small weekly newspapers in my district, and they are fighting for survival. And do you know why they are fighting for survival? Because every time they have to increase their rates, their numbers drop. They dwindle. They have just gone through a postage increase, and these dailies are mailed out. They sell very few over the counter and they don't have delivery boys or girls to deliver these papers. So the only way they can get them to their customer is by mail. And the postage rates really went up on them this spring, and so they are struggling. Now we want to add sales tax, and I realize the newspapers aren't going to pay the sales tax. They are going to collect them, but in the end, it's the cost of this newspaper that is going up. And in these small rural towns, we have a lot of elderly people. All they are living on is a Social Security check, and so when these newspapers increase in price, they're...some of them are going to have to stop their subscriptions and so I would urge you here today to support the Hartnett amendment. I think it is a good amendment to exempt the newspapers from sales tax. And then if some of you want to introduce a bill, then come back next session, introduce a bill, let the newspapers come before the Revenue Committee and defend themselves. I think that is only right and proper to do.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hefner. We will now go to Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in confusion over the issue, which is nothing new. I do that frequently when I get up to speak but I share the sentiment of Senator Landis and Senator Hall, that equity calls out for this amendment to be defeated and recognition of the fairness of the