

community of 1,700, is the second largest city in the 21st District, as drawn by the committee amendments. The committee amendments make a 21st Legislative District that is far, far more rural than the 21st Legislative District is today. All of Saunders County, western Douglas County and northwestern Lancaster County constitute a far more rural area than the 21st Legislative District where two-thirds of the people live in a community of 20,000 people or above. I keep hammering that point home because somehow, even though Senator Bernard-Stevens did a good job of making that point, people get up afterwards and talk about the poor rural people losing out under this plan. They don't. The second point that Senator Peterson keeps mentioning is splitting of counties, splitting of counties, splitting of counties. If you look at the current map, Lincoln County is split, Hall County is split, Platte County is split, Buffalo County, Scotts Bluff County, Boone County, Jefferson County, Otoe County, Dodge County. The guidelines say where practical we keep county...we respect county lines. Well, you're drawing 49 districts within a 2 percent tolerance instead of the 5 percent tolerance that was drawn two years ago. You can't keep counties together. You can't do one or the other. What the committee has done is that they have said where those two concepts come into conflict maintaining the 2 percent tolerance is more important, and the courts have agreed with that. Equal representation is more important than respecting specific geographic boundary lines and I don't know if the committee amendment plan splits more counties or fewer counties than are now split, but we have counties split all over the place. They don't happen to be in Madison County, but they're other places in Nebraska. So the two arguments that have been raised...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ..against the committee amendments are bogus. The committee amendments do not discriminate against rural areas. As a matter of fact, they create...I would guess, Senator Hefner, I think you made the comment before that your district is the only full rural district in the state because you do not have a city of, what is it, more than a thousand people in it? Is that a remark you've made in the past? What's the largest city in your district?

SENATOR HEFNER: Senator Withem, Senator Withem, the largest town I have in my area is Hartington, which has approximately