

opposed, nay. Please vote. The bell is not functioning. Have you all voted? Would you please record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 2 nays, Madam President, on adoption of the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MOUL: The committee amendments are adopted, and we will now...are there any further amendments on the desk? Senator Schellpeper, would you like to open on the bill?

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Madam Chairman and members, yes. LB 398 came about because, as Senator Rogers said, we had some county ag societies, or county fair boards, that were not following the open meetings law. They were not having their budgets approved by their county boards. Now the law at the present time said that they shall be approved by their county boards since some boards were not approved in the county ag society budgets. And also, the county board...the county ag societies or county fair boards were not presenting an audit to the county boards. And so that's what we're attempting to do here is to make the county ag society or county fair boards accountable to the county boards, because they do levy tax dollars and they are not elected. It's a private organization, but they do levy tax dollars. So this makes it so that the county board has more say-so over the actual county fair board or county ag society. It still a...the same group that it always was, except that the county board has more say-so. But I think the main thing is the open meetings law. We had some county ag societies that did not follow the open meetings law. There were some buildings approved that...in a closed meeting. And that's not the right way to do business. So I think it's only right that they have to follow the open meetings law. I think under our current law that they have to do that, but some of them were not doing that. So this will put it into statute that they shall follow the open meetings law. I think it's going to make the county ag societies a lot more accountable and a lot more open to the public than what some of them have been in the past. I think it's a bill that cleans up an area...they do an awful lot of good for their local areas. I think out of the 93 counties, there's like 91 or 92 county fair boards. Some have gone together. But that's the big thing in this local community for the year in several instances. So they're very important for their local counties, but they need to operate as like anybody else does under the open meetings and under the law. Thank you.