

for repair and sales. And what we've done in this bill was an amendment, I believe, by Senator Horgan. It basically says that they have to file their annual report, or...certifying that their utility rate base is not used to subsidize or cross-subsidize sales and service division. That's what the committee amendment does. It strikes out the part of the bill that says that they cannot be involved in sales or service. They can continue to do that, but they have to file this report with the state auditor's office, showing that they are not subsidizing or cross-subsidizing these kinds of services. That's what the committee amendment does. It thus becomes the bill.

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in support of the committee amendments. As Senator Johnson clearly spelled out, the committee amendments gut the bill and replace it with a...a...I guess a less onerous provision, according to which side of the issue you happen to be on. The bill I brought specifically on behalf of independent HVAC operators...heating, ventilation and air conditioning...folks who have had trouble competing because frankly, the gas companies have gotten into the business. They have locked up the market. They have sold service contracts to individuals who have been buying their gas over the years, and they have found that there is very little market for them out there. They have found this not just to be something that is native to Nebraska, but there was testimony given and examples, articles, that both the State of Minnesota, the State of Louisiana, and other states have found this to be true. They have held hearings on this, and in at least one instance, they have put the regulation under the PSC, or the Public Service Commission of that state, to look at these issues. What has transpired over the interim or at least since we've been back in session is that the gas companies have said, wait, let's take a look at this, Senator Hall. We agree, we think that, you know, we need to sit down and examine the problem. We're willing to open our books as Senator Johnson put it. They have introduced a bill. I don't know...I don't remember what the bill number is. It will be scheduled for a public hearing. What we have agreed to do is to adopt the committee amendments today and advance the bill to Select File, have the public hearing on the bill that they introduced, which is basically their version of...they...how they feel this could operate, and then discuss what form the final LB 301 should