

city councils and ask for a rate increase. They present all kinds of good information to them and now I think through some of the work Senator Hartnett did, city councils have a better handle on determining what those rates are. But they determine what the rates are that that utility can charge. What this bill does is it says we don't want you and me who are paying 'x' cents per hundred cubic feet of natural gas, to have some of that money slop on over to subsidize this...this service business. It's not...not fair for...for me as a service contractor who has to charge \$40 an hour to go out and repair a water heater, to have a utility company come in and say to my customer, we'll do it for \$20 an hour, where that utility company is making up the other \$20 on the...on the money that they are collecting from the monopolistic sort of activity that they have. And that's the key distinction. If this was just a small versus large, big guy...little guy can't compete with the big guy, you know, unfortunately that's part of our free enterprise system. But the utility sales that we're talking about here are not part of the free enterprise system. It's a key distinction and that's why I think there needs to be. Keep in mind, all that the bill now says is the utility companies can't do what they came in to the committees and swore up and down that they don't do. This doesn't add any new burden on their business, if they are in fact honest in what they told the committee that they were doing. At least that's my understanding. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the time, and I hope that adds something to the discussion.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: If I just could finish my couple points. I guess that the clothing store example, or the hardware store example, is not a direct analogy. I...maybe a better analogy would be that...and there used to be a lot of antitrust cases involving...for example, like Xerox would require that you buy the...the paper from Xerox, and you couldn't go out and buy paper from somebody else, and that...and that was...there was some question there raised as to whether or not that was monopolistic. And I don't recall the specific cases. Let me...I guess ask so I can better understand this, Senator Hall. But that a good point...I appreciate your analysis, Senator Hall. If...let's take, for example...if a gas company gets their rates set, when they get those rates set, do they include in their application for rates, income that they receive from these service businesses, or do you know?