

February 19, 1992 LB 1008

Thanks, Senator Chambers. I think that Senator Morrissey's comment that solid waste management is another type of utility is an extremely important point and I think if we were to think about that...this issue in those terms, and not...and not inflame the issue into a taxpayer issue, because I really think it's...it is a taxpayer issue in the sense that if we don't come to grips with it, that we are going to be paying through the nose in the future and it's going to cost us much, much more money than...than what we are attempting to allow the City of Omaha to assess in this case. It's a tax savings down the line because we're going to have the funds available to put together a solid waste plan that makes sense for our state. Secondly, I do have a philosophical problem with denying the City of Omaha the right to assess this garbage fee. Politically, the City Council and the Mayor will have...must convince the citizens of Omaha that a garbage collection fee is appropriate. They must...there will be debate, I suspect, and there will be hearings on this. The Mayor will have...will be...must take his plan to the citizens. We already have a voluntary blue bag plan which which has had some problems but...and he's going to have to explain why that plan works, why it should be maintained and why we need these funds to maintain it. That's the job of a local subdivision, is to explain and to debate these issues locally. And it's not our job to dictate to the local subdivisions what they can and can't do in the area of solid waste as long as they do it in a manner consistent with our overall environmental concerns on a state policy level. So, from a philosophical standpoint, I think it's...and I'm sure, Senator Haberman, in your district, your City Council and your County Board assess certain fees and they wouldn't like the State of Nebraska to tell them that they cannot assess certain fees or deal with the problems in their community as they see fit. If...we, in the state, have the authority to assess the fees that we charge and we do legislatively deal with those fees, motor vehicle fees and park fees and all of those fees in areas where we have jurisdiction...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...but it's not appropriate for us to tell the City of Omaha or dictate to them that they cannot charge a fee that will deal realisti...in this case, from a public policy standpoint, I believe, with the segregated fund, will deal realistically with the problem at hand. So, with that, and with the amendment that does segregate the money, I will support