

September 30, 1992 LB 11

SENATOR CONWAY: It is withdrawn.

CLERK: Senator Schellpeper, AM45, Senator. (Schellpeper amendment appears on page 107 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. What this amendment is now, if you will recall the other day with the MIRF bill, they took out one-third of the budget which I guess in my opinion no other agency had to take one-third cut. And I think it's very unfair to have one program have to take one-third of the budget out. So what this amendment is attempting to do is to pare that back to only make it 5 percent. I think a 5 percent reduction in any budget is more than anybody else is even being asked to take. But the MIRF people, the cities are willing to do their fair share and they think that their fair share is to take a 5 percent cut of the MIRF funds. Now if you...the MIRF funds come from cigarette taxes and they're paid across the whole State of Nebraska. The MIRF bill is designed to help the cities. It let's them do some things in their cities that they can't do otherwise, some things that they don't have to raise local taxes for. If we would go back now and cut this as the Appropriations Committee wanted to do, they would have to raise some local taxes. And I think we cannot let them do that because that just gets passed on to the local people. This is a way that they can come in and do some things that are helpful to their cities that they wouldn't do otherwise. It's something that they really need. The money is distributed on a per capita basis so that no matter how large you are or how small, you get money on a per capita basis. My hometown of Stanton receives about \$7,000. They just finished doing some work around the nursing home on some sewer projects and put in some different culverts and things like that. It probably cost much more than \$7,000, in fact, it had to. But at least part of that went for that and they wouldn't have done it if they didn't have this other funds. They had the funds that they could use for that. I think every town has something like that. So rather than have the entire projects for all these cities being cut \$1.5 million which is a drastic cut over this 20-year program, what we're attempting to do with this amendment is to be very realistic and come in and say we'll take a cut. We realize the budgets are having a hard time in the State of Nebraska. We'll take a cut, but let's only take a cut of 5 percent. And that amounts to \$225,000 a year for the remaining 18 years of this contract that the cities have with the MIRF bill. I think it's a very fair, very realistic figure.