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than were allocated previously for state aid went to aid schools. After initial decreases, property taxes still continue to increase. We took over municipal courts and Medicaid. We gave a homestead exemption. We shared the state's sales tax base with local government. It's not that we don't want to help, but the only way to get property tax relief is to cut spending; anything else is masking the problem. On the other hand, it's unfair to be too critical of local spending when much of that spending is a result of federal and state mandates beyond local control. Instead of playing the blame game, we must come together as Nebraskans to address this problem. It's time for us to admit our approach to property taxes hasn't worked. I pledge to join with the cities, counties and schools to find solutions to these problems. In the meantime, I will only support a tax proposal that actually puts tax dollars back into the pockets of Nebraskans. In the past four years, we have made headway toward more efficient and responsive government. We pulled this state together by cutting \$100 million from the budget, cutting taxes and beginning to resolve our tax crisis. We created jobs for Nebraskans, increased agricultural exports by 429 percent, set aside lottery funds for education and the environment. We promoted ethanol and came one step closer to becoming energy self-sufficient through the use of locally based renewable fuels. We pushed for welfare and health care reform and worked hard to make our state safe. Now ask yourselves this question. What can government provide to Nebraskans to make the good life even better? Part of that answer to that...part of the answer to that question lies in our 1995 legislative agenda. First, if we expect to run state government more efficiently, we must clean our own house. We must get a handle on out-of-control government wherever it appears, and I'm pleased to announce this goal in my government efficiency package. With these recommendations, we take state government beyond reaction to proaction. We'll plan strategically and make more efficient use of our resources. As a result of these efficiency recommendations, I expect to realize substantial dollar savings. In addition, I expect Nebraskans will see a simpler, more responsive government. First, I propose we make the Department of Education a code agency. This will reduce duplication of effort and make local governments and local schools more responsible for carrying out education policy. It will make us all more accountable. For the same reason, I propose a constitutional amendment to appoint the Board of Regents. Nearly 20 percent of the state's budget is allocated to higher education. We need to take more responsibility for this large