

SENATOR VRTISKA: That's right.

SENATOR ROBINSON: I'm going to support your bill. I've signed onto the bill and I think that I'm like Senator Maurstad, I'd like to see a little more focus on the rural areas, not that the urban areas shouldn't have their share too. I think maybe they may have, I'd better just be quiet I guess, but I think it's a good bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wesely, followed by Senator Maurstad and Schellpeper.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in defense of Senator Vrtiska and would suggest that he has brought forward I think a very worthy piece of legislation. There are lots of questions about it, but I think we need to give it a chance. That's one of the reasons we put the sunset on the bill. We can work through this, we've got a Department of Economic Development that will work with the local communities that will work through the rules and regulations. We're going to give it five years to see how it goes. We're not talking about a huge amount of money, but I know when I chaired the Economic Development Committee back in the mid-eighties, this is exactly the sort of thing we needed. We needed help for our small towns and our small entrepreneurs. We needed to find ways to help grow our ideas into successful businesses and Senator Vrtiska has got a good idea here. I know there's concerns but I think there is ways to deal with them. I'd ask your support for the bill. I think it's in shape to go forward and do a lot of good for the State of Nebraska.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Maurstad, followed by Senator Schellpeper.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's been some talk about the state providing some incentive for the communities to involve themselves in some sort of cooperative efforts. The state already provides that and already does that. This isn't a new initiative relative to doing that. It appears to me that this would provide the Department of Economic Development a quarter of million dollars that they could basically use unrestricted because the goals are so broad within the way that the bill is written. The Community Development Block Grant Program that's already in place recognizes the importance of cooperative efforts. It's a key component in