

CLERK: Mr. President, the first bill, LB 144, a bill introduced by Senator Vrtiska and a number of the members. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 6, referred to the Banking Committee. On January 27 of this year it was discussed on the floor. Committee amendments were offered and adopted at that time. I currently have no amendments pending to the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Vrtiska, would you like to refresh our memory slightly on the bill.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I certainly would. The partnership bill that I introduced is a bill that would fund some small communities particularly, although it doesn't necessarily limit it to small communities, for the purpose of economic development if they use a cooperative and collaborative spirit in working together to attain the ability to apply for the funds from the Department of Economic Development. We were discussing this on Friday and I certainly support the bill strongly because I think that it's something that is needed in rural Nebraska to help many of the communities who are having a difficult time at this time in trying to some way attract some industry or some type of economic development in their communities. So with that...

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Any discussion? Senator Vrtiska, there appears to be no discussion. Do you have a closing?

SENATOR VRTISKA: My closing, Mr. Speaker, is about what I said during my opening and through the process in debating this, I would ask that the members look carefully to this bill because it has a great deal of benefits for many of the communities in Nebraska and certainly doesn't cost a lot of money and I would like to close by saying that I don't consider this necessarily an expense but more of an investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. You've heard the closing. The question is, shall LB 144 be advanced to E & R initial? All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 144.