

perhaps the way to describe these bills is now we want to give away the fixtures because whatever is left in terms of a tax base is pretty much given away with these pieces of legislation. At the same time, I understand we're in competition with other states. We have a desire to bring in Micron, we wish to grow, and so we have to try to see how we might move forward in a fashion that is both positive for the state in terms of attracting business but also positive to the state in terms of fashioning good public policy. Well, first off, let me talk about the specific amendment that Senator Jones is offering and the specific question raised here with this bill on tax increment financing and what is considered substandard and blighted property. Another bill I supported, back in the early 1980s, was the tax increment financing proposal which was amended in the constitution and eventually enacted into law. It helped do the Cornhusker project and any number of additional projects in this state. That bill, I think, has been a useful bill to try to again move forward and address problems with certain blighted and substandard property. That's the terminology in the constitution, substandard and blighted property. Now that's to be defined by the Legislature in legislation and that is what is attempting to be done here by amending the current statutes in this regard. But I find it very difficult to believe that a fair analysis of the term "substandard and blighted" would come to the conclusion that farmland would qualify under that terminology. And I would ask Senator Warner and Senator Withem and other who are proposing the legislation whether or not they believe that this is constitutionally sound. Now perhaps it will be and it's hard to judge at any one point how anybody would interpret the language. But, in my view, when we passed tax increment financing, again, I was one of those supporting it. The image, the thought that we have is that we're going to take property in any town in this state, primarily towns, that was run down, broken down, abandoned property, property that was beyond usefulness, and we were going to take and remove that blighted substandard property and replace it with new buildings and new activities and I think that's what people in the State of Nebraska voted for when they adopted the constitutional amendment. But now to come back and try to define farmland ten miles or two miles outside of a city limit as substandard and blighted, to me, is a perversion of the constitution in terms of the language that I thought we adopted when we passed that constitutional amendment. So, first off, I would rise and raise constitutional questions about the piece of legislation before you and whether or not, in fact, we can get