

time about had it been just a few miles to the west it would have been in Pawnee County and Pawnee County would now be incurring those costs. It will probably come close to half a million dollars in the next three or four years. How a county like mine could afford to come up with half a million dollars along with maintaining the services that are necessary to maintain a county, I have no idea because they're now at 50 cents and, along with that, I have to tell you that our county has laid off three people on the county road crew and two people in the courthouse in order to keep within the budgetary limits of what they are able to now...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR VRTISKA: ...acquire through taxation. So it's a crisis issue as far as I'm concerned, and I just want to reiterate it's a crisis issue that can happen particularly to any small county in the State of Nebraska, and there are many of them around the State of Nebraska who are at about the same level or even lower than we are as far as their ability to raise tax dollars. So I guess all we're saying here is somehow something has to happen, and when you look that many of the states do now, in fact, carry the whole load, or a majority of the load for indigent defense, then I think we're not doing something that is completely out of character. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Kristensen, let me continue a dialogue or some questions with you, if I may, and I think that you had answered in your time the question with respect to whether the ability of the county to contribute might not be a guideline in terms of how funds are allocated or what policies are established with regard to the allocation, allocation of services, and my dilemma is this. On the one hand, I don't think we should be giving money to counties who can afford to do it on their own, but the dilemma, on the other hand, is that I honestly believe some counties are too small and that we ought not to be rewarding the inefficient size of a whole number of these counties, and most of these counties, if you look on the levy list are right up at 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and some of them right at 5.0 and their valuations are one-fifth, one-sixth, or seven-seventh of what Richardson County's valuations are. And so, again, even though I like all of the substantive side of what's going on here, it's the financial side that bothers me a lot.