

February 26, 1996 LB 1248

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Chambers, you may continue.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I have talked enough I think about the abnormal expenses of government, but I want to say in a brief statement or assertion what I'm getting at. I think it would be virtually impossible to show that what happened in Richardson County constitutes an abnormal expense of government incurred as a result of legal mandates imposed by the state on Richardson County. But even if that can be gotten around, I still think that this discussion of essential business and essential services for which financial relief would be provided from the state need to be defined. Either the essential services will be limited as a first type of limitation to those that are mandated on the state...on the county, city or village, then we know we are not dealing with anything voluntarily or recklessly undertaken by the county, city or village which resulted in a financial crisis. If we limit it by knocking out all voluntary things undertaken and start by talking about those things that are mandated, I think we should narrow it even further. In my opinion, the word "essential" means just what it says; those services that are of the essence of the duties imposed on one of these entities. Not every duty imposed is essential, meaning that it's necessary to the continued existence of the entity, or the functioning of the entity, or taking care of the health and welfare of the citizens who are served by that entity. I am unwilling to leave essential undefined when it modifies business and services, which are to be continued as a result of assistance from the state. I will not try to amend abnormal expenses of government incurred as a result of legal mandates because that narrows the bill so much that it might knock even Richardson County out. So without my advice being solicited by Senator Vrtiska, I would suggest that he look at that term. It is more restrictive than probably anything else in the bill. If additional amendments are not adopted, I will oppose the bill. I may offer an amendment or two, especially with reference to essential business and essential services, but beyond that, after I've given my arguments, which to an intelligent, reasonable, open-minded person will be persuasive and result in the nonpassage of this bill, but if, as usual, I'm dealing with at least 25 of my colleagues who don't fit into the category I laid out, I will just take my lumps as this bad piece of legislation is enacted into law.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Hilgert.