

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members, there's been several issues that come up and there's a few points that I would like to make. One is you cannot have a county manager that helps manage all government, or a county administrator. The courts have said you cannot do that. Now Scotts Bluff County, and I know many others, have a budget officer, and have some assistance for county commissioners, but they cannot... they do not have any authority or any say so over all those elected officials. They create their own budgets, they submit them, and the only authority that the county commissioners really have is whether or not to fund those budgets. And there have been cases that they have not funded the total budget of one of those administrative officers, they have been sued by the administrative officer, and they have said, you have to give us this money. So, Senator Lynch, you cannot have a county manager or administrative form of government. No matter what you call them, they're not really a county manager. Maybe a budget officer or comptroller or something like that. but it is not, you cannot manage the functions of county government. The other thing that I wish to bring across more and more and more and for you people to realize, this is not something that's mandated, this is not something that every county has to do; that if the people of a certain county determine they want a different form of government, all we are doing with this constitutional amendment is getting out of their way. The state currently has road blocks in place that doesn't allow county government the flexibility, the autonomy, the movement that they may need to make on a county level to address county problems. We don't tell anybody what they have to do. As a matter of fact, we're telling them even less what they have to do with this constitutional amendment. We're getting out of their way. I also would like to talk about the fact that there are some counties and some cities throughout this state, and I know there are bills that are addressing this, that are looking at mergers, that are looking at better collaboration, that are looking at countywide, perhaps, law enforcement or communication systems, whatever it might be. And in speaking with the consultant that's currently working with a county school district and cities, where they run into trouble, where they currently run into trouble is you cannot bring elected officials to the table. They don't have to come. They're elected. They don't have to collaborate. They don't have to negotiate. They're off in their own little "turfdoms" and their own little world, and if