

February 28, 1996 LB 1373

as we discussed economic development incentives. And I hope you've all had a chance to look at the copy of a newspaper article that appeared yesterday in the Lincoln Journal, concerning the economic development project that we were in hot pursuit of last year. I would only speculate, based on the contents of the newspaper article, that the project has turned a little sour for Utah, who apparently worked harder than we did to get it. I think substantially more caution than we, as a state, have shown in the past is due for our consideration of those projects and their implications for the state of Nebraska. I also believe that we will have an opportunity to talk about those projects at some greater length, later in this session, if a bill, that Senator Brashear has sponsored, ever gets out of the Revenue Committee, and I expect that it will. So I don't want to prolong the discussion here today or to talk about Senator Brashear's bill. But this is...1373 embodies what I hope everyone agrees is a careful and unbiased and thoughtful approach that can, indeed, offer us guidance in the future before we rush off in pursuit of some target or some objective that, once we get it, turns to dross in our hands.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I rise in support of the bill. I appreciated Senator Warner's explanation of the intent of the bill and the sort of focus it's going to have. This is a step forward, though it is not a major leap forward, but it does represent an issue that I have raised now for a number of years. I have suggested that, at least in the last seven or eight years, that we needed to have some sort of cost/benefit analysis to get at the sort of questions that Senator Vrtiska talked about. I think what we have found, in our experience with LB 775, is that there are projects that are worthy projects, that provide good jobs with benefits, that are a positive net gain to the state of Nebraska, and we need to reach out and assist those type of projects through various incentives. And I am a person who voted for 775 and one who's voted for other economic development initiatives. But my sense is also that sometimes they go too far, that sometimes, in fact, we throw money at projects that are not a good investment, that we end up with projects that pay low income wages, they do not pay the sort of level of wages that we'd like to have, that they do not end up being a net gain, considering some of the impacts on communities and the revenue losses involved, and that we end