

February 28, 1996 LB 1322

SENATOR HILLMAN: ...I think, the kind of task force that the committee amendments addresses, and then also LB 1322 and how they feel it would be a benefit in the efforts that they've already put forward in addressing low cost housing needs. With that, I would oppose the Maurstad amendment and support LB 1322.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Hillman. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I also am in opposition to Senator Maurstad's amendment. If you look on page 6...page 4 of the bill, it's talking about matching funds for new construction, rehabilitation or acquisition of housing units to assist low income and very low income families. We know that this bill, or we should be aware that this bill is sort of outlining for us the scope of the problem and what it is we would hope to accomplish as a state. As has been stated before by other speakers, the problem exists...you can drive through certain parts of any city and see it with your eyes. Senator Lynch indicate that something ought to have been done before now, and I agree 100 percent. There are statutes right now that require cities to demolish substandard housing and those pieces of property that result in what are called slums, when they're located in a district represented by somebody like me. There are absentee landlords who are not brought to book, there are undercover sales of property, it's put in the names of people other than those who actually hold the interest in the property, and many things are done which will create almost unendurable conditions for very poor people to live under. I see this bill as a mechanism to allow people with an attitude, such as mine, concerns expressed by Senator Lynch and others, to hold the state's feet to the fire. We have a piece of legislation that is creating a structure and instrumentality through which problems are to be addressed. Some of us have tried to find innovative ways, in the past, to deal with the problem of the absence of affordable housing. Many years ago, when the Legislature agreed with me to enact into law a bill that said Nebraska would not invest any public money in businesses or institutions that did business in or with the racist government of South Africa, among other things, I had added a provision that any money which would be reinvested should be made available, if possible, to help provide affordable housing. Naturally, nothing was done about that because there is not the will, there has not been the organized