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Mr. Chairman and members. I rise to oppose the Maurstad amendment. A lot of the things I would have liked to have said Senator Hillman and Senator Chambers have said. Senator Chambers did say the problem surrounds all areas of Nebraska, and I've heard that before. I sat through the committee hearings on this thing, we had 14 people get up and support the bill as we worked it. We only had one person against it, and that was because basically of Section 11 and what the committee amendments have handled. So, because of that, I support the committee amendments, recommend people to support the bill with the committee amendments. And I would yield the rest of my time to Senator Schimek. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Schimek, you have approximately four minutes.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the body, thank you, Senator Klein. I just wanted to have the opportunity to respond to a couple of points that were made here this morning. And one was the point that Senator Maurstad made earlier, and I agree with him, up to a point. I do believe that communities are the best place to make the decisions and the policies and the kinds of decisions that need to be made. I mean I agree more than in principle, I agree with that. I don't think this bill does anything to take away from that ability of communities. I would like to remind you that Senator Klein just said there were 11 different groups and people that came in, in support of this bill. And amongst them, Senator Maurstad, were the League of Nebraska Municipalities, the City Administrator of Cozad, the Association of Community Action Agencies, all of these groups that are so community oriented and that want that ability to do something about housing in their communities. So I really don't think this bill would do anything but enhance the ability of communities to do something about low income housing. The Department of Economic Development came in at the hearing and said that by the year 2000, this state will be about 39,000 housing units short in the rural areas of our state, and 10,000...no, Senator Vrtiska, 10,000 of those are in the low income housing area. We have to do something about this problem. Now if you question whether this bill goes far enough, we can look at going a step further. I think this is the first step. And I would remind you that we have, on other occasions, set up funds when there was no funding to put into the fund. And my best example is the Mammography Screening Fund that we