

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Madam President. Just to kind of revisit some of my arguments yesterday. The fact is regardless of how talented or how much ability that this particular task force might have. I don't believe that there is any way that they can accomplish what is set forth in the committee amendment relative to analyzing and reviewing all of the processes and codes across...across the state. You know, the Legislature sets the various uniform building codes, Nebraskans participate in the setting of those national uniform building codes in determining the appropriate criteria. Those building codes are there for the health, safety and welfare of our citizens and, quite frankly, the building codes aren't the only culprit as to why we have a housing shortage in the state of Nebraska. Low-income housing without question is certainly a concern and a problem that needs to continue to be addressed. I believe that it needs to continue to be addressed by those groups and organizations on a local level that are trying to meet the needs and address the specific situations that are relevant to their particular locale. This is a huge problem, no question, and that's part of my concern in that we're starting down the road again in another endeavor on a statewide basis in which we already have indicated that we're not going to provide the funding for, and I am just hesitant at this particular time that we embark on another journey the scope and magnitude of this one, when I believe that very successful efforts can be made at the local level if they choose to make low-income housing a priority in their particular community. So I see the creation of this task force as, number one, unnecessary; number two, this type of information and these types of groups have been meeting and discussing these issues for quite some time. I doubt that they are going to be able to break any new ground relative to this, and my last comment is I still have a difficult time understanding how this...how the Housing Code Task Force, within the Department of Health, is going to be able to try to determine what alternative state and local incentives ought to be for the encouragement of housing development. So I think they have a very wide-ranging scope presented. I don't think they can accomplish it in the period of time that we've set forth. I believe that in the long run these are the types of decisions that continue to need to be addressed primarily at the local level with local efforts, with local commitment; and by doing so, we'll be able to continue to make progress in the area of low-income housing for those communities and individuals