

February 29, 1996 LB 1322

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Senator Beutler's concern that he raised about the need to define affordable housing, we do not have a very defined explanation of affordable housing because we recognize there are some differences on that, but essentially it is housing occupied by families earning less than 80 percent of the medium family income. So they would be below the average income in the state, by 20 percent at least, and that the cost of housing would be less than 30 percent of family income, and then you'd back that off. Actually, we had some discussion in committee from Ward Hoppe, about how difficult it is for families on low wages to be able to have any kind of hope whatsoever to get any housing. So this is a severe problem for those individuals and we need to find a way to address it. We would be happy to, I'm sure, Senator Schimek and I and others, to work with Senator Beutler on a definition that we can adopt on Select File on affordable housing. So I want to share that concern with you and our desire to work with Senator Beutler on it. Again, I rise in...

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: . . .opposition to the Maurstad amendment. I think the option ought to be there for us as we go forward. The idea is that we will look for funding sources that might be dedicated to the trust fund. We will come back with recommendations in December. But whether or not those bear fruit, this is a priority, I think, for the state and needs to be among the options looked at as the budget is developed next year. I would ask you to support the bill and oppose the Maurstad amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. President. My sensitivity to this particular issue probably is, after working through the budget for mid-biennial adjustments, in that we continue, as a state, to have a lot of unmet needs in current programs, before we start launching off into another one. And, Mr. President, I would suggest to you that if Senator Wesely would listen when I spoke he would know what I said, and he wouldn't have to make up what I said. I've never said there wasn't an affordable housing problem in this state, and so I take offense to Senator Wesely indicating that I said so. Secondly, I indicated Beatrice, like