

we have today is no...a situation where essentially if the Appropriations Committee says one of the great issues facing our state is the need for housing, we need to find a way to address this. It is blocking economic development, we can not attract industry in, in some cases, because we do not have adequate housing for the workforce that will be brought in, and this is, in fact, going on as we discussed earlier. We have got housing problems in Lexington, in Norfolk, and elsewhere across the state where we've had some economic activity. Workers have been brought in, but adequate housing has not been available. So let us say that the Legislature sees this, that it is a problem that has come about over the course of the last year, and we decide something needs to be done. What are our options right now? We really don't have an option to move forward on addressing the needs of housing in the state of Nebraska. We do not have a trust fund. We do not have a program which we can turn to and take steps to address this concern. So the feeling was, you establish the trust fund, you get the rules and regulations, you see what you...what is established through it, and then this Legislature will be in a better position to decide what sort of revenue sources we want to look to, and whether or not we want to make an appropriation. But that decision is ours to make. It is not something that's forced on us through the bill. This bill does not require any funding from the Legislature. It merely provides the opportunity should the Legislature decide that this is the step they want to take. Why deny us that opportunity in the future if we feel that this is, in fact, a priority? And I think it is a priority. I think that it is of great concern to many cities and many individuals across the state of Nebraska and we ought to have the opportunity to take that step. So this is merely an option, an opportunity for the Legislature. I would strongly oppose the Maurstad amendment. We need to move forward on the bill. I would ask your opposition to the amendment. Thank you.

**SPEAKER WITHEM:** Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Schimek, followed by Senators Maurstad, Robinson, and Vrtiska.

**SENATOR SCHIMEK:** Yes, thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body. I rise in opposition to the Maurstad amendment, and I do so reluctantly, in a way, because we did discuss this at great length the other day, and I hate to be repetitive, but I know that we need to debate this again this morning to refresh all of our memories, and I would just say to you that if we