

million dollars a year leveraged out with other resources can have a dramatic impact on the very severe problem we have in some communities in this state with housing. This is not just a "I don't care about people" situation, which is...we just heard from Senator Witek. This is, if you care about economic development, you should care about this bill. That should be the response you have. And that's why you see lobbying for this bill, that's why you see testifying at the hearing on this bill the Chamber of Commerce, the bankers, which have identified this as one of the top priorities for this next year, and also, yeah, the Department of Economic Development, their commission and others as well. Yes, you have nonprofit groups that care about people that are coming in. And absolutely, they do care and they want to see housing provided for people. But this is more than just a human service need. This is...this is a need for this state. When we want to grow, we have to have housing for individuals. What's happening is, as others have talked about, is the jobs that are being created are not paying enough. We are not able to afford the housing. So we have to turn around and partnership with the private sector and find ways to address the concerns that they have. And as for the cut in funding that...that we're talking about, that's the task force that were going to look at the expenditure of private sector dollars and public sector dollars on code enforcement, which we questioned about the effective use of that. So that is part of the bill. We are looking in how we can reduce the cost of housing, how we can reduce the spending on housing by...by looking at the different elements that build up into the cost involved with the housing industry. So we are addressing that concern. On the other side of the concern, in terms of the funding for this bill, there is no absolute funding on it. It is an authorization to establish the trust fund. We can look at different resources to do that. We can address that issue next session after more time is put into it. But it ought to be on the table. It ought not to be left as an abandoned stepchild of state government. We have done next to nothing in terms of working with the housing needs of the state of Nebraska. We've let it linger and fester and the wound is now in need of attention and dressing. And we have got to do what we can to heal that problem by having a fund out there available to assist communities who have a particular problem with housing. That's what's established here. The federal government is cutting back their support. Senator Witek talks about all these federal programs, how wonderful they are. Well, as wonderful as they