

March 4, 1996

LB 1322

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill at this time, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: The question now before the body then is the advancement of LB 1322 to E & R Initial. The Chair would recognize Senator Coordsen followed by Senator Warner.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I haven't spoken to this, but I certainly have listened, to an awfully lot of it. And I have yet to hear hat a good reason for this bill is. I don't know what affordable housing is, other than my own definition. I really don't know what low income is, other than the Wesely amendment is. I do know, though, that there are lots of opportunities, both private resources and other public resources, that enable people, when they can afford a home, to find affordable housing within their abilities. I get this funny, queasy, trembling, nervous feeling that when we talk about affordable housing as it's proposed to be developed at some point in time a program out of this, that we're talking about encouraging people to purchase homes, new homes, beginning homes, what we used to call starter homes, of a quality that's not affordable, and transferring the rest of the funding for those homes to the other upper low-income or lower middle-income people, keeping them from being able to put together the down payment resources for a starter home. Some times, in the field of government, it's probably better not to begin a trip if the road is heavily traveled than it is to float one more canoe in a flotilla that is already fielding the stream banks. The issue isn't so much affordable housing, the issue is how we go about taking care of people so they can home-own. You know if we really wanted to create a scheme for affordable housing, we would create a scheme whereby people with limited resources, those that have fallen on hard times, people just entering the labor market that have spent their five or ten years in putting their little \$1,500 or \$2,000 deposit together, a scheme where they could buy the starter home and then, again, to borrow a phrase from my world, "fix it up," and not be penalized by increased valuations and property tax for fixing it up. There are lots of things, I believe, that we could do here on the floor of the Legislature that would encourage homeownership, would make homeownership continue to be affordable. But I don't really see, Senator Wesely, and I'm sorry to have to say this, anything really in this bill that moves the state one inch toward where we perhaps ought to be