

it serve only Ponca Tribe members, or will it serve a broader need in terms of housing?

SENATOR MAURSTAD: No, this serves just...just the Ponca Tribe.

SENATOR WESELY: Okay. Well, thank you, Senator Maurstad. I'm not going to try and hold up the bill. But I would like to take a couple minutes just to express some concerns. And if the answers are found for me before Select File, no problem, otherwise I may come back to readdress this. First off, the two counties that are involved are Madison and Lancaster County that have a concern with the bill. And I'm still trying to be in communication with those counties to find out exactly what their concerns were. What I heard back was in Lancaster County the housing authority here felt we would set up a duplicate housing authority that would in fact serve more than the Ponca Tribe. Their interpretation of the statutes are...is that this authority has to, under federal law, not serve just the Ponca, but would serve others as well. And so the feeling was that you'd set up a duplicate, parallel system of housing authority, one for the Ponca's and others, and the other for the broader population. So, hopefully, we don't end up duplicating under the statute. The other concern that I...but actually in follow-up to that concern, I did get a letter, which I have available if you'd like a copy, and it indicates and eases my concern on that point about the duplication. And I'll read from it. It's from Judi Morgan, the Executive Director of the Commission on Indian Affairs: The Northern Ponca Housing Authority is committed to working with existing housing authorities in designated service areas that serve Ponca tribal members. Through cooperative efforts we are confident that such needed affordable housing will be provided to all Nebraskans. That eases my concern on that particular point. I want to reiterate that I will be following up on that to ensure...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...that the local authorities here are okay. The amendment by Senator Maurstad does help as well with the question about delegation of authority of the federal government. With that, I will end my comments and may or may not readdress the bill when it comes up on Select File. Thank you.