

some of these small towns be entitled to property tax relief if they can have the opportunity to get it? The Maurstad amendment guarantees they aren't; guarantees they're going to stay at 70 mills or 75 mills, or depending on the size of the city. They'll have the option to do that, but under the concept here they also have the option to avoid it where cooperative efforts or merger, consolidations and those kinds of things can prevent it. I would urge the body to reject the Maurstad amendment.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Will, members of the body. It's difficult on any of the amendments that we'll have before us to talk simply about the amendment itself because what we do on one amendment, you still have to keep in mind the entire package of what effect it may have and, to that degree, I guess I'm going to divert just a little to the rest of the package. As we talk about unfairness and in this case Senator Maurstad is arguing that certain cities, particularly some smaller cities, are going to be hurt more than, and the dollars from that will come more from those that are hurting rather than those that have sales tax already, that are not going to have to do much cutting, if any at all. And, first of all, let me come to the point that my...the North Platte area certainly would be one of the latter because their levy is right around 39 cents, so at the level that they're being...would be capped on the levy they're technically not going to be hurt at all, with the exception of whether or not their sales tax and keno funds are included in their overall budget, which now they're outside the lid, and that is yet to be discussed. But I do want to point out that there are some inequities. If Senator Maurstad is correct on the cities, it certainly then would be correct on schools. And I use my example of, again, I could use Hershey or Maxwell, Brady or North Platte, North Platte sticks in my mind, they're at about \$1.36, this bill would cut them down to \$1.10. There are other school districts in the state that are at 89 cents, and I understand it's two years in coming but when it does come that district that's 89 cents, no harm done, no problems. Lids go away. They can go to the \$1.10 if they want to, which would be an increase in funding for 'em. It will lock in a lot of inequities into stone, but then turn it one step further and go to community colleges. One of the argument that says that that's okay because if the public wants to support,