

SENATOR WILL: Time.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: ..throw that out the window.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Pedersen.

SENATOR PEDERSEN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, District 39 is the largest district populationwise in the state now. We're growing by 2,200 homes a year. The little towns, this was...of Elkhorn and Bennington, they aren't so little anymore, they're growing fast, and I know Omaha's drawing very close and the district itself covers both Omaha, them little towns, part of even Senator Avery's town of Gretna, called Gretna Heights. There's no way that I could represent my district and vote for this bill without this amendment. Then we come back to the fact of what's it going to change? As these little towns, Elkhorn, where I live, recently, in the last year, annexed the SID where I live and, in so doing so, our services have gone up. We've never had better police service, better snow removal than we have now and they can't maintain that at that 45 cents. I'm, by no means, any expert in the area of tax and I've been listening closely and hearing lots of different things. In my district, and I hope if any of them are listening will get back to me on what their real feelings are about this, but I'm hearing no groundswell about the taxes but there's a real groundswell right now about don't do nothing, leave us alone. And then there's a feeling here that if we don't do something in this body that the petitions will go through and if the petitions go through there's people think they can beat them. It comes down to, again, the things we've talked all afternoon about, is services. Can we learn to live on what we've got? Or, if you live in District 39, them people from Omaha that are moving out to District 39 are moving out there so they can have better schools, better towns, and are interested in investing more money and it's the reason they moved and are buying new homes. So it's a difficult one. I'm not here to encourage you people how to vote, but basically it comes down to the act that I think Senator Maurstad's amendment is a good amendment. I know for some of you it won't do anything, but for the little towns that are trying to survive and do want to survive I think they're going to need them. And if they don't want to survive then they'd be more beating down the door about saying, yes, we want these...we want more property tax relief.