

suggest what's in some of the other bills and ask you to think about what's being done for cities and counties, and nothing is being done to protect the schools, nothing that I can think of. And I reach out a little bit here and step a little far because, like you, I'm not on the Revenue Committee, I'm not sure I know all the details of all these bills. But it appears to me that with regard to cities we're going to have a municipal equalization bill. So at least with respect to the cities that are going to be the worst hit, we are already providing, in this package, for at least a part of their salvation. Cities can have sales taxes. Cities can have keno operations. Cities can have several other mechanisms, none of which are available to the schools. One of the big... interestingly enough one of the big political subdivisions in this bill that's allowed are sanitary and improvement districts. Now sanitary and improvement districts are used in the particular local of our state to absorb development costs and help cities develop and grow. But the only city that uses that to any large degree is Omaha. If you're in a small town and you're developing, if you don't have these big, major additions of 200 and 300 homes and building a golf course and a whole unit and having this political subdivision, called an SID, fund it, if you can't use that, something on that scale, then your little town, or little, medium-sized town and your development costs are a part of your municipal costs. So therein lies another advantage, but I bring it up in the context of this discussion simply to indicate that here's another way out for some of the cities. Lincoln doesn't use SIDs. Well, they could start using SIDs, they would have fewer municipal costs in a certain area, and they'd use SIDs and their tax levy to develop, like Omaha does. All of these things are there for the city, provisions are in this package to help protect them. With respect to counties, first of all, as has been pointed out, they can squeeze all these little, miscellaneous districts to the extent that it's politically feasible or to the extent that they think it's necessary. They have the controlling hand on that 50 cent levy, which is... there will be pressure there, there's no doubt about that. But there's flexibility there. If we provide for a county sales tax, I believe, of 1.5 percent, there's a mechanism there that we're giving them right now to help save themselves. And, of course, their overall levy wasn't lowered, even though it has to be shared with this miscellaneous... with these miscellaneous districts. They also can start keno operations. In short, either through this package or through existing mechanisms,