

is for deficits that cities incur in trying to provide transportation.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: The total budget goes to fund...the funding goes to fund all of the operating systems across the state. That funds 50 percent of their deficit, which means the other half of that deficit has to be made up locally. In the case in Omaha and Lincoln, it amounts to a state aid situation. It is not fund...their deficit is simply an allocation of funding to aid them in their operation of their...of their budget.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: It only covers a portion of...

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Right.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...of that.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: And it covers a portion.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Well, like Senator Crosby, I would object to this not only because it's Lincoln or only because it's Omaha. But apparently...I mean the state has adopted a policy here that they believe that providing public transportation is good. And I...and I tend to believe that if we cut public transportation, then we hurt only those who are maybe without transportation at all. And, you know, we talk...all these policies interrelate. We talk about getting people off of welfare and getting them back to work, and yet we know that transportation is one of the big problems that people have when they're trying to get off welfare, go back to work. We, I mean, we got to...we got to stop and think what the overall policy is. And in this case, I don't think it's a good policy to discourage public transportation. And it would be discouraging to Lincoln, I know. I don't know what Omaha's circumstance is. But we have trouble every year deciding what we're going to cut from our bus system so that we can stay in business or what we're going to do to raise fees so that we can stay in business. And it's a very difficult problem to keep public transportation going. But it is exceedingly important, it's very important for the elderly, it's very important for those who do not own cars or other means of transportation, and it is very important for those people who have sight problems, who cannot, of course, drive, who need the public transport...I mean there, there's numerous groups that benefit from public transportation. I think Lincoln probably