

April 2, 1996

LB 299, 1050, 1114  
LR 292

percent of market value, and that agricultural land shall not be taxed at more than 30 percent of use value, which basically relates to the fact that agricultural land in Kansas is taxed at less than 7 percent of market value. Quite a difference between Kansas and Nebraska. Agricultural land in Kansas is taxed at less than 7 percent of market value. I even have a valuation notice on a quarter of land in northwest Kansas. It's dryland ground, it's tabletop flat and it drew some 60 bushel of wheat last year. The value of that land is probably four or five hundred dollars an acre. I haven't talked to realtors out there. I don't know what it is, but it's probably a 60-70 thousand dollar quarter. It was valued by the state of Kansas last year at 4,584 dollars. And keep in mind the farmers in Kansas only pay 35 mills of property taxes for their school support. All we're asking is to protect the status quo. Don't tax our agricultural land or our real property more than 80 percent or more than 100 percent. If we're going to have property tax relief, and I think I could argue, very convincingly maybe, that LR (sic) 1114 or LB 1114, LB 299 and LB 1050 will probably mean property tax increases in some areas of my district. I think this would make the constitutional amendment more attractive to farmers in rural Nebraska and we would finally say we do have some guarantees that at least agricultural land won't be taxed in excess of its value. So I ask you to carefully consider what you're doing here today because I think rural Nebraska and all the farmers in this state are going to stand up and take notice on what happens on this amendment. I think it's important. No, we can't get to where Kansas is, but there's nothing wrong in taking a look at what our neighbors do. It's in their constitution and keep in mind Kansas doesn't tax personal property, so we've got to wake up a little bit here and put in some protections for our rural areas. We have a problem out there. You know, grain prices are high. If our grain farmers have a good crop next year I think things will work out pretty well. I don't think we're going to have a problem. But the cow/calf man could be in trouble. They're getting about half of what they sold...for their calves what they sold them for three and four years ago and, in a lot of cases, their property tax bill's going up. Better not have much debt against that land or better not have much money borrowed in the bank against those cows or you're probably in trouble right now. This doesn't change what we're doing now. It just puts it in the constitution and provides some safeguards out there and I think our property tax payers would be more comfortable if it