

back to the cities. So a reduction in that is probably not inappropriate, but I think the fact that it's there and it's of significance ought to be at least mentioned. Also, the establishment of a new sales tax authority for counties...I think it's a 1.5 percent sales tax authority to counties, is something I don't recall much discussion about and, of course, when we established a sales tax for the cities it was quite controversial. I do recall...I think we started with a half cent, and went to a penny, and then to a penny and a half, and every year, as it went up and the authority increased, we had quite a battle, usually coming out of Omaha, to increase city authority for sales tax. Here we are establishing for the first time a county sales tax, and I think that is significant and ought to be noted. There was also I think a 5 cent additional levy available to counties and cities for public safety services. Again the countervailing argument on sales tax issue is that it's only used for public safety services, to consolidate those efforts and I, for one, agree that that needs to be done. The city of Lincoln and Lancaster County, when our former sheriff became the city police chief, there was some brief discussion about a merger between the county sheriff office here in Lancaster County and the city police in Lincoln, and that didn't go very far, but I thought at the time that should have had more discussion and should have been more carefully considered. So an incentive to provide for a greater consolidation and coordination of public safety seems to me to be a worthwhile effort. So in discussing this with Senator Warner, I do see that as a worthy goal. The only question is, do we need to have this additional authority to counties for a sales tax in order to accomplish it? And finally, the concern that actually prompted a lot of this interest on my part was the loss of revenue that Lincoln and Omaha have under the bill. Lincoln would lose about \$950,000, the city would, under the equalization aid formula that's being developed here. There is a slight gain because school aid equalization would also receive some premium tax money. The gain to Lincoln schools is about \$150,000. The loss to the city of Lincoln is \$950,000, so Lincoln ultimately would lose about \$800,000. The city of Omaha loses \$1.7 million. This is not a proposal, of course, that in fiscal terms is very advantageous to Lincoln and Omaha. It was included in this package, and other bills were as well that, in balance, would have ended up I think fairly treating taxpayers across the state of Nebraska. For instance, LB 1059, which was the bill that I had introduced that would have provided for the