

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 11, 1999

LB 105

take the realistic approach here and look at how things operate in the real world rather than according to a mathematical construct. Because I feel that if we put everybody in a boat that's sinking everybody develops an interest in not having the boat sink, I want the rural people to be put in the same boat as the nonrural people. Then we're in a position to discuss this matter with each other on what some might call a level playing field. So I'm going to support Senator Smith's amendment that he's offering at this point.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Further discussion, Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body. I would like to discuss an issue that has been alluded to but something that we really haven't addressed at all in the debate today, and that is the fairness issue. We have talked about senior citizens who are seeking affordable housing and the waiting list that exists throughout the state of Nebraska, not specifically within the urban areas, although even within the urban areas we have a high demand for affordable senior citizens housing. But I want you to look at the chart and look at the median family income, for Omaha for instance, which for a family of four is \$53,600. If you only had two people, a husband and a wife, senior citizens, their median income, a hundred percent of median income, could be \$43,000 and they would qualify for housing under LB 105. Now I want you to think back at what we did when we were looking at the homestead exemption and realize that we did not give any property tax relief whatsoever to any senior citizen who is in the income range of \$43,000 for a couple, not one, and yet they have...they have a need to stay in their homes and have property tax relief so that they can afford to do that. And yet we are going to give a property tax subsidy to an entity just for renting to those same senior citizens who could qualify for this housing. It doesn't go to the renter. Remember, they would pay the full market rate. And yet, when they were in their homes, we would not give them that kind of a subsidy. Now are we creating here, in the Legislature, with our...our approach to the problem, are we creating part of the problem? Are we driving senior citizens out of their homes so that we are creating long waiting lists for this kind of housing? I think it's something we need to