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FLOOR DEBATE

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hearing taxpayer protests, but also in equalizing the tax rates and valuations from one county to another. It's a relatively small group. Our own Bob Wickersham was recently appointed to the TERC board, if you will, and we had the current chairman of that group, which is Mark Reynolds, a lawyer, come over and testify on behalf of this bill. One of the things that the bill does is to allow videoconferencing around the state so that protests can be heard, county petitions for equalization can be heard, and to do that, without having a person at the site where the county is speaking, able to take exhibits. In fact, they'll be able to be sent to Lincoln. Which means we have to modify the Administrative Procedures Act to allow us to do that videoconferencing and to save the money that that permits us to do. We also create a rule that says the commission's proceedings are open to the public, and one of the reasons we do that is because we also want to change the application of the Administrative Procedures Act so that they do not apply to the rule-making authority of TERC, and to allow for an open agenda. One of the things that happens is that there is equalization ripple effects. Once you open up a question of one county's equalization, the county next to it or the ones contiguous to it might be implicated, and TERC wants to be able to have a responsive agenda. When you do the open meetings law and apply it to TERC, you have to nail down the agenda, publish it, and then only make exceptions for emergency circumstances, and these aren't exactly emergency circumstances but they are late breaking circumstances. So we allow the public to come in, the press to come in to observe what's going on, but we will allow for an agenda to be created that is more flexible than what we would otherwise be able to do in the open meetings law. The goal, by the way, eventually, is to get to a web site. It was suggested by Media of Nebraska and the TERC suggested, thought that that was a very good idea. They'd like to be able to make a useable web side so that you could have the agenda and make changes and, yet, still give notice to people of those changes. One of the things that starts the beginning of all the TERC events is this long recitation of statutes that apply, constitution provisions that apply, treaties that apply. It makes for this long legalistic opening for what would have...what was supposed to have been a taxpayer-friendly forum, and it just overwhelms the person who's come in to make their