

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

February 14, 2003 LR 18

once we determine in our homestead exemption program that you qualify for a certain percentage, we can't distinguish between voter-approved property taxes and the other nonvoter-approved property taxes. So the amendment before you would place before the voters the clarification that would determine for us what, in fact, their intent is. Because LB 1114 was a bill created by the Legislature after this language was ever included in our constitution, which in fact allowed levy overrides to be approved by the voters, and of course bonds have been around for a long time for construction. The language is found on page 3 of the Legislative Resolution, and the new language added in the green copy says: or provide that any such residence actually occupied as the homestead is exempt from all or any part of the levy assessed on any...on such portion of the value by one or more political subdivisions as determined by the Legislature. The committee amendment restructures that language. I support it. It's more clear and we will address that in the committee amendments, but it clarifies very, very clearly that we're talking about voter-approved or nonvoter-approved property taxes. So we will actually be getting definition from our voters as to whether in fact they want the Legislature to consider those voter-approved issues. One of the concerns that Senator Coordsen brought to us is that, in fact, you may have communities that have a large proportion of people of low income who, in fact, have large exemptions, and maybe 100 percent exemption, under our homestead exemption. When a levy override or a bond issue comes up before them, they may somehow think that I don't have to pay for this because the state is paying my portion of the property taxes so it doesn't matter, so if you want it, sure, okay. But that does leave the people, who in fact are paying those property taxes in full, to bear the brunt of that decision. I think that his concern was that, in fact, you have an impartial decision when you make that choice at the ballot booth that, in fact, you know that you're choosing to pay for something yourself when you vote for it. So I am placing that before you. I think that we'll probably have a great deal of discussion and questions on this, because we never want to amend our constitution without good cause. And, Senator Cudaback, I think that we'll probably want to look at the amendment. Thank you.