

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

April 9, 2003

LB 367

classes, because that's special legislation, but by mentioning a city of the metropolitan class or size, that refers only to Omaha. I wanted that explained for the senators who may be unfamiliar with why the amendment is drafted in the way that it is. There is a program in Omaha that is dealing with lead abatement. Certain parts of Omaha have already been designated as areas where there is a serious problem with this lead contamination. There was a battery factory, ASARCO, and there may have been other sources of this lead, but from whatever the source, the northeastern part of the city primarily, where poor people now live, is contaminated by this lead. If you look at the information that I gave you, it talks about in the third dot that there are serious problems that can befall a child who is subjected to this poisoning. It can retard the development of the brain. At a sufficient concentration, it can be lethal. So I don't think that there has to be any great amount of argument to establish that lead contamination is dangerous. Omaha had gotten money from the federal government to conduct this program, but that money has run out. It is anticipated that more may come, but in the meantime houses have been identified. There has been a list of prioritization based on the damage that is likely to occur to the children in those houses, and this money that I'm asking for would allow the continuation of that program. Last year, as you will see from this information, over 200 homes were taken care of at a cost of \$2 million in federal money. Those little children who were up in that balcony today from Conestoga would include children from the area affected by this lead contamination. As to the appropriateness of transferring this money from the Environmental Trust Fund, I would remind us that in the special session last year money was transferred out to pay lawyers who were handling that low-level nuclear waste lawsuit and the Republican River lawsuit, and money from that fund has been used to clean up landfills in other parts of the state. So this that I'm asking you to fund fits within the type of work that that trust fund should be spent for. It will go directly to a problem which has been documented. It is in the public interest, and I hope you will support this amendment. I have to add a caveat here. I bring bills that may be controversial. They may even deal with very important and profound issues, but rarely do I bring bills that cost money. My bills generally don't have a fiscal note except