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LB 608

speaker is Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Madam President and members. I rise to offer comments on AM2006, and that is the population stipulations as I stated in my opening. But I do want to point out that I believe that there are situations where small communities fall through the cracks and AM2006 seeks to prevent that. We can't solve all the issues with any single amendment, but I think we can help with the situation here that is certainly appropriate. And when you look at the communities across the state, I don't think Maxwell should be excluded from benefits just because it happens to be close to North Platte. I mean it's a far different situation than Elkhorn is in Douglas County, and that's why it's not in here. And there are commuting communities around the state, whether they're close to Lincoln or Omaha or Bellevue, that experience benefits from being close to those metropolitan areas. And I was told earlier that Scottsbluff is an urban community and I asked for more rationale on that and certainly I would be looking for more rationale as to why Scottsbluff is an urban community, but nonetheless there are towns in Scotts Bluff County that certainly could benefit from the provisions that are left in LB 608 or the Bromm amendment, more specifically. And so it's a middle approach but certainly leans on the side of conservative numbers when you look at what can benefit communities across the state. If there's a community in Hall County, for example, like Wood River is what pops into my mind right away, why should they be excluded from benefits because they're close to Grand Island, that would throw them over the threshold of the 25,000 population of a county that is currently in the AM2005? So I urge your positive reflection on AM2006. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Smith. The next speaker is Senator Jones.

SENATOR JONES: Madam President and members of the body, I want to stand up and support the underlying amendment here that I did sign onto it with Senator Bromm and a couple others to try to get something for rural Nebraska. And I guess I wanted to talk about Smith's amendment just a little bit too because I guess I understand what he's thinking about because when he mentioned