

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

March 23, 2005 LB 273

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Synowiecki would move to amend the committee amendments with AM0845. (Legislative Journal page 910.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Synowiecki, to open on your amendment.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members. As Senator Cunningham indicated during his opening, LB 273 is to provide entrepreneurial support for economically depressed rural areas of our state. And I very much appreciate Senator Cunningham bringing this bill forward. I'd like to note that the Legislature has established a history of linking rural economic development interest with our established enterprise zones in our state. This includes providing incentives for federally recognized enterprise zones within the scope of rural development legislation. In 2003, the Legislature passed LB 608, the Rural Employment and Investment Incentive Act. The act applied to both rural counties with populations of less than 25,000 people, and state and federal enterprise zones. Members, we have two federally recognized enterprise zones. Essentially, they exist in northeast and southeast Omaha. The criteria for these enterprise zones are as follows. The area is one of pervasive poverty, unemployment and general distress. The area is located wholly within the jurisdiction of a local government that is eligible for federal assistance under Section 5318 of this title, as in effect on October 28, 1992. The unemployment rate, as determined by the appropriate available data, was not less than 1.5 times the national unemployment for that period. The poverty rate for each populous census tract within the area was not less than 20 percent for the period to which such data relate, and the areas meet at least one of the following criteria: Not less than 70 percent of the households living in the area have incomes below 80 percent of the medium income of households of the local government, or the population of the area decreased by 20 percent or more between 1970 and 1980. I think you'll agree that the criteria as outlined under federal guidelines, the criteria set out for our enterprise zones, kind of fits nicely and is a unique fit for the underlying intents of Senator Cunningham's LB 273. The amendment that I have put forward, AM0845, essentially does three things. It expands the