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FLOOR DEBATE

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building buildings, or working on joint projects. We have been working diligently and negotiating with a number of interested parties in this body that have taken an interest in this LB 217. The bill as written in the green copy allows two political subdivisions as defined in the bill and as amended, to cooperate on building a building up to \$5 million, provided that they only use 5 percent of their restricted funds in debt service in any given year. And at last...at our last meeting on this bill, Senator Beutler amended and was successful in amending the number of voters it would take to remonstrate against this joint bonding authority between two political subdivisions, from 15 percent of all registered voters in any one public agency to 15 percent of the registered voters in...the same number that voted in the election...last election for Governor. We've run into some problems with that because county clerks across Nebraska have had trouble actually defining how many voted in the last election for Governor when you've got a public agency that spans over four separate counties and the software is not available yet. We've gone a step further. A number of you have shared some concerns that this bill maybe gives the public agencies too much authority in bonding without an election and exceeding their lid in levy limitations. So I would offer this amendment. And what this does, this significantly ratchets down the number of people that are required to remonstrate against a joint public agency. As you will look in the amendment that's on file that we're discussing right now, AM0968, 5 percent of the registered voters or the numbers listed in the amendment, whichever is less, this significantly reduces the number of people in places like Omaha and Lincoln that can petition against a joint project. Under 5 percent of the total voters in Omaha would be 12,700. With this amendment, it would be 1,500 people that could sign a petition to place this joint bond issue on the ballot. In a city of the primary class such as Lincoln, it would be 1,000. In a city of the first class, it would be 750 or 5 percent, whichever is less. And a city of the second class would be 250 or 5 percent, whichever is less; and villages, 50 people or 5 percent of the registered voters, whichever is less. We are significantly reducing the number of people it would take to vote against, or to remonstrate against any proposed joint project. We did the same thing for counties, school districts and other qualified public agencies. For