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FLOOR DEBATE

March 31, 2005 LB 71, 273, 309

SENATOR FISCHER: I'm sorry. Thank you. There were four legislative proposals to provide entrepreneurship opportunities presented this session. LB 71, Senator Stuhr's bill, provides grants to farmers and ranchers to add value to their products. We've had \$1 million allocated for that. The Governor's proposed budget in the Appropriations Committee's preliminary recommendations provides a \$250,000 increase for Microenterprise Partnership Fund. LB 309 provides an investment tax credit for starting and growing "microbusinesses." That would allocate \$2 million, but that's still in the Revenue Committee. And then we have LB 273 which provides grants to the communities, and I hope we can put \$1 million, at least, into that. Fully funded, these proposals benefit the entire state, and they cost less than 4 percent, people. They cost less than 4 percent...

SENATOR ENGEL: Time. Thank you, Senator Fischer. The Chair recognizes Senator Cunningham. Senator Cunningham waives. The Chair recognizes Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I stand in support of Senator Beutler's amendments. I think those are something that will probably really help the bill, to clarify changing that political subdivisions, particularly to cities or counties, and also changing the length of the grant process from five years to two years. I think it was interesting to hear the discussion on the road construction, looking at that four-lane highway. I can tell you from York to Mexico...I was at the dedication when we finished the stretch in, around the York area. We do have a four-lane highway now that does run from York to Mexico. Yes, we need to continue to work on the other portion in the rest of the state. But this bill has nothing to do with that. This bill has to do with retaining businesses and providing some leadership training to these communities, particularly in the area of entrepreneurship. And I wanted to share just something that our representative, Congressman Osborne, has been working on this area throughout the state, and one of the things he says is fostering entrepreneurship is the key when it comes to retaining the next generation, pointing out that in order to have the same quality of life, let's say in Columbus, making \$35,000, one would have