

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

May 9, 2005

LB 312

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. I'm a fourth-generation Nebraskan. And I also have 5 children and 16 grandchildren. So we're going to be here for a long time, hopefully. And it's certainly not my desire to leave this great state. But I was also in the construction and development business, and have...started in the construction business in 1960. And in the eighties, my partner and I had a 200-acre development site called Old Mill, at 108th and Dodge Street. And also, I can remember what it was like when Enron decided to leave the state of Nebraska. And the common thought was that...in Omaha, will the last one to leave turn out the lights when you go? And that was the theme and that was the thought process of the Omaha community. There was depression on many people's minds. What's going to happen? And then ConAgra stepped forward, and they also said that, well, we would like to do something, but unless the tax situation changes, we're also...could be induced to leave. And so with that, LB 775 was crafted. I think there's only four senators here today that were here in 1987 when that bill passed. But when it did pass, I can tell you, the business climate in Omaha, the business climate in the state of Nebraska, changed dramatically, and we saw growth, sustained growth. And it was good growth. We brought businesses in, such as Senator Mines was talking about with that great firm in Blair, and others throughout, in Lexington, and all around the state of Nebraska. Businesses started to come into Nebraska. Well, that was in 1987. This is 2005, and things have changed. And other communities have changed, and there are other incentive packages out there that certainly are more advantageous than what we have here in Nebraska. But if we do not keep pace, then not only do we not attract other businesses, but I have to tell you that all the businesses in Omaha, all the businesses in the state of Nebraska are constantly being courted by other states and other communities. And some of the packages that are offered are very good. Well, after looking at our economic picture in Nebraska, there's one thing I am really convinced of, and that is that we must grow this state because, yes, we do have Medicaid that is growing, we have educational costs that are growing. And just the cost of operation is growing. And if we do not have the economic engine pulling the rest of the economy in this state, and if we have people leaving this state, and if we don't have