

out and that is, in a nutshell, the committee amendments.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The question is the adoption of the committee amendments. All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. We are voting on the committee amendments please. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of committee amendments.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The committee amendments are adopted. Senator Hannibal.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, LB 362 was a very noncontroversial bill, meritorious I believe are the words that you want to use. What Senator Newell did not say as far as the committee amendments is that the E clause was attached to this bill and I would like to explain both the bill and the reason for the E clause. Metropolitan Utilities District is a noncapitalized term but for all practical purposes it is a capitalized term in that it affects only Omaha and because it is a publicly owned utility it has to find all of its authorization from the Legislature as opposed to a cooperatively owned utilities district whether it be power or utilities. We have a big surge across the country and in our state for weatherization programs and energy conservation programs. MUD, because of its large accounting base and because of its ability to bill its ratepayers through an already in place system, has a unique opportunity to become part of a weatherization program. They have asked to do so in conjunction with the cities or federal, state agencies and the federal and state agencies and the city and the State Energy Department have asked them also to become a part of it. What they need is authorization to become a part of it from this Legislature. What will happen if you would pass LB 362 is that you would allow MUD to participate in these weatherization programs in that they would become the bill collector for the programs. They would help give out the funds to predominantly low and moderate income people for energy conservation and weatherization projects to upgrade the energy efficiencies of their homes. These would not be ratepayers funds. These would be funds that come from two different, three different, four different sources. They would be strictly the bill processor. They are already involved in the auditing program throughout our city and they tell people how they can improve, indeed, improve their energy conservation and weatherization. There are no ratepayer funds involved in this operation with the exception that they would have administrative costs, those costs that would be the manpower involved in developing this particular program. We