

March 26, 1984

LB 913

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Fenger, are you going to carry the bill now?

SENATOR FENGER: Yes.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Fenger.

SENATOR FENGER: Thank you, Mr. President. 913 was sent to the floor for your consideration with a vote of support from the committee for community action agencies in Nebraska and the services they provide for low income Nebraskans. 913 is the result of an interim study conducted by the Public Health and Welfare Committee to address a real live need. I don't believe the importance or need for community action and services they provide is in question. During the public hearing for the interim study DSS testified community action agencies provide and here I quote, "a viable mechanism for carrying out local planning and service provision." They went on to point out that community action agencies offer various flexibilities in their programs which cannot be attained in the public sector administration. Noting the agencies most significant of these flexibilities is their ability to change focus quickly in order to respond to crisis or changing need. CAA's provide the "fill in the gap" where state social services leave off. CAA's local decision making capability allow them to bring important social service decisions within their communities. Their localness allow the community action agency to focus their needs and address them accordingly, make makeup of the community action agency, that is local citizens, lay the burden of responsibility for spending tax dollars in the hands of those closest to the situation and most responsive to their recipients. Now you have all received a recap of the funding distributions for the last two years. If you look closely at the percentages of low income populations and compare these with percentages to CSBG funds each agency received, I think you will note an obvious disparity in the disbursement of these funds. For example, central Nebraska CAA located in Loup City serves 13.6 percent of the low income population in Nebraska. They cover 21 counties. They travel almost 17,000 miles but it is only allocated 7 percent of CSBG funds to do so. 913 intends to direct as

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