

April 20, 1979

LB 138

amendment. I don't think we are disagreed at all as to what should be done, Senator Lewis. It is just a matter of how it should be done. No one here is without the knowledge that counties are simply an extension of state government. The county is an extension of the state government. They do what the Legislature says. The county government makes no laws, no ordinances. City governments do make ordinances and regulations and rules but counties cannot do this. The counties did not ask for this in the first place. They still aren't asking for it. This is a federally mandated program, yes, state mandated program that the counties must cope with. When Senator Kahle and I were both back on county boards we had a financial crunch then. Why? Because the counties have been under a lid for many many years, 14.28. You have heard of it many times. The counties have been operating under this. What have counties been doing to meet these obligations? I will tell you what they have been doing and we were doing it when I was there. We were robbing from the road funds to pay these obligations. That is exactly what we were doing. What the situation is now, they have robbed from the road fund so much that there isn't any more to rob. That is why you have poor roads nowadays. That is just simply that. Now the counties must pay this. These are indigent people that require care. We don't want to say no, you shouldn't do this. In fact, the counties can't do this. They must do this. What say do they have? None. The only thing for them to do is pay their proportion. They are up against it. I don't think it is a bad thing at all to follow Senator Kahle's lead in saying we will do this over a four year period. Whatever the cost is then, you don't know any more than the rest of us, but whatever it is, it is the percentage that takes a great deal. I have been in touch with the county commissioners in my area. They are having a financial crunch and I will bet in your county, if they are near the fiscal limit of 14.28 they are having a crunch. I think we should...we have decided, Senator Lewis. We have not delayed the decision. We have made the decision now we are going to take care of this, the 10%, and we are going to do it over a four year period. This is not delaying the decision. We are making the decision now. Yes, we are going to do it now and this is the way it shall be done. It is agreeable with others, namely the Governor, that it should be done this way. I think Senator Lewis is trying to harpoon the bill. Maybe not. I hope not, but I don't think we can do it all in one year and I do think that we can handle it over a four year period and I heartily recommend that we turn down Senator Lewis' amendment.

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