

however, the Fowler amendment causes considerable expense and hardship not only for the cable TV industry but for the tax payers. As an example, before an increase can be made two public hearings must be held. Two public hearings must be held on whether to increase the cable TV rates. Who is going to pay for these costs, the advertising of the meetings and employees cost to hold meetings? The tax payers are going to do this. Also, this is a case of pure discrimination. Ambulance service and disposal services that are privately owned and the rates are set by the city councils do not have to have two or even one public hearing. The city budgets that amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars only have one public hearing and we are asking for something as small and significant as the cable TV rates to have two public hearings. The amendments also say that at the public hearings the payers, the rate payers may comment on the programming. That they may comment on the programming, what good does this do when only one system has the local programming capabilities and all the others are national network or independent stations and I say that no city council can control the network programming. Cable TV is not a public utility. It is not a monopoly. The local subscriber has the right to purchase the service or not purchase a service. To sum up the Fowler amendment they would impose new terms and conditions on franchises and city councils with no benefit and increased cost to the cities and the rate payers. I ask you that we do not adopt the Fowler amendment.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: I guess I would like to explain a little bit of the philosophy behind the amendments that I proposed that were adopted to the cable TV bill. The bill came in and it indicated that contrary to any home rule charter that there should not be an election as far as the cable TV franchise. It was specifically directed at problems in Omaha. I see no real objection to that removing that election requirement but I think that in removing that election requirement that I felt that there should be some guarantees placed back in for the consumer. Now, I do not agree with the characterization that cable TV is not a monopoly, I think that in fact in every community that it exists it is a monopoly. I also believe that now although it may just be an entertainment service, that it has a wide potential far beyond the...even the telephone industry and as such it is going to be a major communication industry in Nebraska. I think that there should be some provisions and some guarantees that there is a certain amount of public