

May 14, 1979

LB 585

CLERK: (Read roll call vote found on page 2103 of the Legislative Journal.) 21 ayes, 22 nays, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Motion lost. Is there another motion to the bill?

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Wesely now moves to return LB 585 to Select File for a specific amendment. Senator Weseley's amendment is on page 2057.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I will be very brief. I have in the amendment requested that an additional \$72,286 be appropriated for the Senior Communities Service Employment Programs. These are in Omaha and Lincoln specifically. This relates to action taken over the past several weeks by Governor Thone in reallocating some discretionary funds that he had. Those are federal funds, by the way, and taking those monies from these Senior Employment Programs and diverting them to the Rural Green Thumb Program. The attempt here is to raise some issues and I realize at the time that we are considering right now, this issue, is going to be very difficult to gain the support probably for this amendment but I want you to know that nineteen senators from Lincoln and Omaha co-signed the letter to Governor Thone requesting that he reexamine his decision to divert those discretionary funds from the employment programs to the Green Thumb Program. The response by Governor Thone was that his decision, he was going to stand by it and he was not going to change his mind and so \$72,000 was diverted. The net effect is that there are a number of older Nebraskans in Omaha and Lincoln who will be put out of work by a program which by most estimations has been very successful, very positive. Instead they are going to add this amount of money, \$72,000, to a program which has a budget of about 1.3 million to 1.5 million dollars which means basically that the impact on that diverted funds will be negligible on that program but the impact on the employment programs in the Cities of Lincoln and Omaha will be devastating. They will cut in half the funds available to employ the elderly. That means a lot of older people are going to be put out of work. There is a number of problems involved with this issue. The first one is that there is confusion over what the figures are that we are talking about. The Governor says he is diverting \$36,000. The figures that we have are that he is actually going to divert \$72,000. Now that is a major difference and I think it leads