

With the adoption of the committee amendments then becoming the bill, I would ask that Senator Sieck explain the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT: All right, Senator Sieck, will you proceed to explain the amendments which become the bill according to Senator Simon.

SENATOR SIECK: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, LB 525 has been changed quite a bit from the original draft. We had quite a bit of opposition at the hearings from the municipalities and in working with the municipalities we have been able to come up with a clean bill which would be accepted by all individuals. I would like at this time to explain some of the reasons. One major change was to eliminate from the proposal group homes serving mentally ill people. That was one of their objections. The bill now stands that it would provide group homes for the mentally retarded and handicapped. Another major change places limits on the number of group homes that could be located in a community. The limitations are based on the relative size of the community, and may be exceeded only by a variance issued by that municipal governing board. I understand that Senator Haberman has an amendment on these amendments to take out the listing of the 500-1,000 that would allow one group home for every 500 people, for a population of 1,000. I don't feel that this will really effect the bill drastically because if there is just one group home this home can be established in that community whether this is in there or not and wherever it is established. We are providing in this bill that these homes will be designated 1,200 feet apart at a certain amount of homes in a given community. With a municipality of less than 2,000, one group home would be established. With a municipality of 2,000-9,999 a one group home for every 2,000 residents. With a municipality of a number between 10,000 and 49,000 one group home for every 3,000 residents. In a municipality between 50,000 and 249,999 one group home for every 10,000 residents. In a municipality with 250,000 one group home for every 20,000 residents. Now also in this bill, in a metropolitan area the distance is increased to one-half mile. This is in the City of Omaha which is the only large city that we have in our state. The reason for this change in the City of Omaha was that the original statutes in the City of Omaha or the original regulation in that city or zoning regulation is that these homes have to be located a half-mile apart. It seems to be working in that city. So we have set up the bill so that it would work for this particular city. On the other hand group homes already in existence would definitely not automatically relocate as a result of the open site selection allowed in this bill. We have several group homes throughout the state. Now these group homes would not necessarily have to locate because they are now not under these standards. In other words the grandfather