

with what the language says. Now I might have more sympathy for Senator Hefner's proposal if, in fact, this Legislature had constantly mandated programs that subdivisions did not want but I know in the case of my own county and this may not be true in Senator Hefner's county, but that Lancaster County has been very supportive, at times, of programs that this Legislature has mandated. They have come and they have requested that we require programs, human services, such as mental health, mental retardation, alcoholism programs and most recently now there is a bill dealing with aging services. They have come in and they have asked or have supported efforts to require these programs and then of course they can go back and they can say, well the Legislature required us to do this but they asked. They came and you could look at the record. You could look at the hearing. There is people from counties, there are people from school districts who come and say, we support giving us the power to do this. We support being required to provide this service. Now with Senator Hefner's bill it goes a little further. They can come in. They can ask us to mandate something. We mandate it and then they can say, you have got to pay all of the cost. That is very neat for political subdivisions. They can get us to mandate something and we have to take all the cost. They can even, if I read this right, take a program that we are not requiring but which they may be providing, let's say Lincoln schools are providing a gifted program and there is no state dollars in there and they are having to pick that up under their local tab. They could come in with other school districts and require this Legislature to provide a gifted program, something they are doing already but then that would mean we would have to pick up that cost. We couldn't even, if I read this right, do what we are doing now with Special Education or mental health and mental retardation and have a matching basis where we will provide some of the money if the school district or subdivision picks up other costs. So I think that if I was a political subdivision I could see this being used very conveniently to start getting the state to pick up costs that we are already picking up costs. Now Senator Hefner said that the lid prevents subdivisions from being able to absorb the costs of new programs but when we considered the lid we specifically provided that the Legislature could exempt a new program from that spending lid for one year. After that then it would be limited to a 7% growth but all we have to do is write into a bill, and we did this last year with the preschool education program if I recall. All we have to do is say, this shall not come under the lid for the first year. So that new program won't have an impact that first year. It then gets built in the base and then it could only grow 7%. So I think we have taken care of that