

Clearly, this bill would override some local zoning ordinances but only, and I must emphasize, only for a very few small group homes that serve eight or less mentally retarded, autistic or cerebral palsy citizens. Beyond these minor exceptions, the local zoning codes will apply to all the rest. Now let me deal with two fears. First, these group homes are not all likely to be located in any upper, middle, or upper class residential areas. The service providers could not afford to lease such homes. Second, I believe that such homes will not be a deterrent to the neighborhood. They can improve the neighborhood. Now I decided to talk to someone now living next door to a group home for the mental retarded. He indicated to me that he and his family were very pleased with being a neighbor to a group home. It seems the previous residents of the house next door prior to it becoming a group home didn't take good care of the property and then it became a group home and immediately the property began to shape up. The group home is well maintained. The people living in the group home have been excellent neighbors, and in just reading the paper last evening, I discovered that the Governor now is going to give the City of York some finances to have a group home in my district and I am sure pleased and these individuals are going to come from the institution at Beatrice to live in my district. I am very appreciative of this fact because I am sure we will take good care of them.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Cullan, do you have a remark to make before...we are almost out of time. Senator Nichol. Senator Nichol, do you wish to be recognized on this?

SENATOR NICHOL: Yes. Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I am glad that one city has awakened already and I think we should all awaken to this LB 525. What Omaha is wanting is wanting out and I assume the reason they want out is because this law usurps the authority away from the zoning commission and the city council for putting these homes where they think they ought to be. I live 450 miles from Omaha. I have no idea where they ought or ought not to be but I do think the city council and the city zoning commission and the City of Omaha does have an opinion as to where these buildings ought to be. I agree with many parts of the bill that these homes should be in residential areas but I don't think that we should take that authority away from the zoning commissions and the city councils and say, no matter what you think, this is where this building is going to be and this hostel or the group home, whatever we call it, shall be located. I really think we should