

CLERK: 26 ayes, 3 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance the bill.

PRESIDENT: LB 53 is advanced. Next is LB 422.

CLERK: Mr. President, 422 is a bill offered by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. (Read title.) The bill was read on January 18, referred to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for hearing. It was advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, LB 422 is the product of an interim study. The interim study was suggested to us by Senator Rod Johnson and we finally broke down and held a hearing. It happened to be a hearing right next to the beginning of the session, just the day before, so it didn't cost us anything. We got ourselves a good bill out of that session because 422 comes recommended by the Nebraska Association of County Officials. There are 27 counties in Nebraska that use the township form of government. Townships are areas six miles by six miles usually that have a special mill levy and a very small township government of three officials. Those officials are elected by a township to administer that mill levy for the purpose of either running a cemetery district or for the keeping of roads. Almost all of them that are now functional use their money for road purposes. Actually township government probably remains an anachronism but it does have a very real value. That value we found out at the beginning of this session is to serve as a kind of economic buffer, a deep pocket for county government. As you all know, county government has an operational mill levy maximum that is applied to it by law above which it cannot go. There are counties, one of which we heard from, Saunders, that used the township mill levy to do road service which the county itself could not afford to do. If we were to do away with township governments across the state, there would be a number of counties that would be put in a very serious position where the needs and services that are presently being paid for by a mixture of county and township levies could no longer be paid for if they had to simply rely on the county levies. There are, however, counties in which