

townships serve no viable purpose. They remain on the books, no one runs for office, people get persuaded into holding the office when, in fact, there is simply nothing going on. We have one county that raises a total of \$7,500 of tax money for township government, \$2,200 of which is spent in actual services, \$5,000 of which are spent in salaries and consultant fees to decide how to spend the \$2,000. Clearly there is a variation between the counties that need township governments and the ones that don't. However, to get rid of a township government, you have to have a very lengthy petition process, getting ten percent of the voters of the last election. 422 makes a very simple change. It permits a county board to put on the ballot the question, "Shall we retain the townships form of government?" There are some counties that can make immediate use of this bill. There are others that would never make use of it because townships are serving their purposes in their areas. I would submit to you that LB 422 is a flexible approach to meet the declining fortunes of township governments in this state and yet at the same time permitting those that remain viable and strong to continue to exist. I would move the advancement of LB 422.

PRESIDENT: May we have order in the Chamber, please. (Gavel.) The Chair recognizes Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I rise to support this bill and I want to publicly thank Senator Landis and the Government Committee for working so diligently on this particular issue because I know it is a difficult one because as Senator Landis has explained to you, depending upon the area in which you live and the county in which you live, any form of township government may be operating very well or not at all. And in my case in Clay County, the township governments do not work at all but there were other counties that used these instruments very well and the people in those areas want to continue to keep those. And I think that the key word here, and Senator Landis has hit upon it, is "flexibility", and I think that that is important to remember in this issue. As I said, there are some who want to use it and some who probably will not, and I think that he has drafted a piece of legislation here that provides that flexibility for the counties and I, for one, strongly support it.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is there further discussion on