

Agriculture Committee and as the Chairman of an area that is undergoing some of the most dramatic revolutionary economic problems, maybe in the history of this state or at least in the last 50 years, I think that we need to consider that. Are we adding more burden on the backs of some people that are already having difficulty in paying their taxes because certainly that is going to happen if we reorganize the districts? I think in the small towns and the small schools people would pay more to keep those small school in the small towns if we had to reorganize or find a better plan to support those schools because from what I've talked to the people of this state and the people that have come in and the people in the galleries today, they have indicated to me that they want those small schools out there and they'll pay more if they have to to keep them there and I think that shows that they are very sincere about the quality of education in those small schools and the fact that they've got children in those small schools. You know one of the biggest problems we're going to face in the coming years is how we're going to save rural Nebraska. We're undergoing a dramatic change right now, but we're looking at changing how we're going to deal with rural health care, how we're going to deal with rural schools, how we're going to deal with rural communities. That is the area that somewhere down the road we're really going to have to examine how we're going to save those communities and how we're going to save those health care facilities out there as this dramatic shift continues. Now I'm not saying my colleagues who are proposing to advance LB 662 are not sincere in what they are trying to do, but I feel very strongly that until we come up with some taxation formula that equalizes the taxation base and yet continues to allow those small schools to operate, I cannot support this bill. I did vote to put this bill out on the floor and I'll admit that because I wanted to see us address the question of property tax relief in this state. Homestead exemptions are not going to provide the property tax relief that we need especially in the rural areas. When you're paying a large property tax bill every year, a \$75 homestead exemption, and that's what we're proposing this year, is certainly not going to be significant relief to those property taxes. It may be in the urban areas but certainly not in the rural areas. So I am asking you to very seriously consider this situation. I think Senator DeCamp covered an awful lot of the issues that I wanted to cover and so I won't be redundant, but I do think that we ought to rethink our position on this issue, I have, and I