

For half a dozen years I have introduced a bill that would address the issue and we were never able to reach a consensus. I'd just like to point out that we have some terrific inequities in the rural areas, but not all of the inequity today, ladies and gentlemen, rests with the present residents of the Class I districts. The rural residents of the Class III's are carrying a substantial load today with no relief in sight. Many of those residents did what they thought was the right thing as Senator Remmers pointed out. A number of years ago when they attached their land to a Class III district in an attempt to solve first of all the problem, the physical problem of attending a school and secondly, the problem of some kind of equity in the area of taxation. But the development has not taken place and part of the responsibility belongs here but a part of the responsibility also rests with the residents of the State of Nebraska, both sides who have resisted any change. We see today a terrific hodgepodge, a checkerboard, that exists when you try to outline the various school districts. My own farm lies in a Class III district and I can travel across several Class I's getting to David City and I can tell you when people say it is not a tax issue, you want to look at the tax statements for my farm and those in the Class I districts surrounding it for the last 25 years. I can show you very plainly and simply that it is a tax issue. I wish I were worth as much money today as I have paid in additional taxes for having been in that Class III district for the past quarter of a century and I think that many people are in the same situation. We talk about how we're going to keep those small schools. Let me tell you something else, ladies and gentlemen, unless the economic conditions change in rural Nebraska today, you're not going to have to worry about the small school because there won't be anyone in the rural areas. You're going to see the greatest shift of people from the rural areas to the urban areas you've seen since the '30s unless something changes pretty quickly. And those tax situations, whether it is the rural resident of the Class III as I am, or whether it is the rural Class I resident who now is burdened with an extremely high, free high tuition rate and we have both kinds. But we have pitted neighbor against neighbor, school against school, urban against rural for 35 years and we have made no substantial progress and so as of today, with the bill on the floor, with the problems that face us on funding, with the problems that face us on trying to resolve the Amendment 4 issue, I think it is time we decide the