

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. Senator Higgins, then Senator Schmit, then Senator Miller.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. I think what we've been talking about in the Legislature ever since I came here five years ago is property tax relief for the homeowners. I represent the largest downtown area in the State of Nebraska and the biggest businesses probably are headquartered there, Mutual of Omaha, Union Pacific, Northwestern Bell, InterNorth. Never, ever have I had a businessman write to me and say they want property tax relief. I've had them write me about unemployment insurance, I've had them write me about Workmen's Compensation insurance, I've had them write to me about taxes on other items, but never specifically about property tax relief. And, Senator Hannibal, I wish I made as much money as you show that you pay in taxes. Well, I mean...am I misreading this where it shows that you pay \$47,000 a year in taxes? I don't make \$47,000 a year. Well, I don't know how anybody could be a small businessman and pay \$47,000 a year in taxes. Senator Lamb said that if we adopt the DeCamp amendment this is going to make this a homestead exemption bill again. Senators, this is who have been asking for property tax relief. Now, maybe my good friend Senator Lamb wants property tax relief for the wealthy people, but the people that I have talked to in my district, out of my district, they want the homeowners' property tax relief. This bill will probably be killed if we are going to give to those who already have so much going for them. These people that...you know a favorite saying of a very wealthy millionaire that I knew, he said to me once, he said, Marge, I've never minded paying income tax. I figure as long as I am making it, I don't mind paying it. Terry Carpenter stood on the floor of this Legislature one day and I admired him tremendously when he said, you know, I made over a million dollars last year and I never paid a penny in income tax. And he said, I did not cheat, I just used every tax loophole that my CPA found that the federal and the state government had given me. Now the average homeowner, the average taxpayer, not the one that pays \$50,000 a year in property taxes, he can't afford and probably doesn't use a CPA that could get him all the tax loopholes. So between his income tax and his sales tax and his property tax the middle income is barely holding on. I don't see anything wrong with making this a homestead exemption. That's the