

immediately? Because they want to drop dramatically, drop, I said, the rates of long distance between Omaha and Lincoln, between Lincoln and Grand Island, between your busy places, so they can hold on to their customers, so customers don't bypass. Now their compromise offer finally was two years. The compromise offer of the balance of the industry, let's say the little companies, was five years and that was the least that they would accept and, therefore, the settlement in the bill is five years. So for five years it guarantees to the rural areas you have a subsidy, and if you don't have a predictable time frame when that subsidy starts falling off or is removed, then you have no incentive ever, ever, for any competition out in the rural areas, and if you have no incentive for competition, and you have the other half going on which is artificially high rates in certain areas, then the people paying the artificially high rates are not fools, so they start saying we can bypass to get the same service for a lower amount, and what happens? Ultimately, and it is happening, the number of people providing the subsidy, the number of people providing the artificial amounts decreases and so the ones left have to keep going up, and so you get total artificiality. Therefore, remove the five years as he has it, you are gutting the bill because you are saying there is going to be an unlimited period. There is no deregulation. You are going to have an artificially subsidized situation forever.

PRESIDENT: Thirty seconds.

SENATOR DECAMP: I urge you not to adopt the amendment. As I say, if you were going to pick one area of the bill that would be a dagger to the heart and a dagger to the heart of getting decent service ultimately in rural Nebraska, this would be it, because if this bill isn't successful, I can guarantee you as a matter of economics something else will happen. You are not going to be able to continue forever with one group being subsidized very high, another group doing the subsidizing here, because the ones who are doing the subsidizing are choosing and are able to leave that system, and as the system, whether it is Bell or AT&T or whoever, as they lose customers and you just have a limited number, the limited number are paying even higher rates. So the main purpose of this bill, the overall purpose is to get rates to actual cost...

PRESIDENT: Time is expiring.

SENATOR DECAMP: ...and to make those who are receiving a