

Senator DeCamp, that in the past, because of PSC supervision, which was always a regulatory body and was in position to take action in the event that the company transgressed, those rate increases never took place. What you have proposed here, and due to partly Senator Lamb's amendment which has limited, in effect, some of the rate increases, but you have proposed to totally allow deregulation in prices, but to keep monopoly on territory. I would suggest that is not deregulation. That is a monopoly with the ability to price as the company sees fit. I suggest that is not in the interest of the public. And I would suggest that any indication otherwise would be to the...would not be truthful with the people. You know I don't like to read from your statement of December 19th.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: You quoted the allegation of the competition between automobiles. But you also quote, in the case of telephone service, there is no competition in most rural areas. Therefore, if AT&T increases its rate 100 percent or more overnight, you really have no choice but to pay twice or three times as much for that identical service because you would have no other place to go. I submit to you that under this system there is no alternative available, there is no option available to most people, and that if, in effect, 835 becomes law the monopoly that once existed will eventually return and there will be only one or two possible carriers in the entire territory. Hopefully other states will not be as ridiculous as we are being here in Nebraska, will not let that occur on a nationwide basis. But what you have proposed here is an amendment or a bill that will, in fact, give the existing companies monopoly over territory and freedom to charge as they please. That is not in the public interest. It is not in the interest of the consumer. It is not in the interest of the people of the State of Nebraska.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Higgins, please.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. In spite of Senator Schmit's explanation of the amendment, I'm still not certain, Senator Schmit, about long distance as opposed to local service.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The call is raised.

SENATOR HIGGINS: I'll yield the rest of my time, and I apologize, but this is an important amendment and it is an