

that, because we need to do that. Finally, let me tell you, our local governments at a time when we increased our own budget one-half of 1 percent which is what we did this year, in Douglas County, my native land, our city, our schools, and our county increased their overall budgets in excess of 10 percent. I have charts which were prepared this summer at great pain by my staff showing what local government increases have been over the preceding three years. We couldn't get it for this year because we didn't have the local government budget figures in, and later this morning I will disseminate those charts. Now what one will discover when one looks at those charts is that local governments frankly have continued to operate as though there is no economic crisis in rural Nebraska. They are not prepared for the storm...they are not preparing for the storm that is descending upon them as we are preparing for the storm that is descending upon us. I think we have to make the choice and the choice is to be solicitous and protective of that fragile agency that we have, our postsecondary educational system, our social services system, our health system, our highway system, and at the same time say to local government, you have resources that we don't have. You have got significant reserves. You have got your own property tax system, and maybe you finally have to take a hard look at whether or not you can afford everything that you are trying to do. And so we are suggesting that local governments be reduced by 6 percent altogether and state government by 1 percent. That is the nature of the amendment.

SENATOR LAMB: The Chair recognizes Senator Carsten and we are discussing the DeCamp-Vard Johnson amendment to the budget bill.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, before you declare me out of order, I want to make some opening remarks but I will be on the subject. There have been some remarks made relative to the Appropriations Committee's activities this morning which I personally have resented but I think most of the committee members have too. It appeared to us when we started out that we had a job to do and was delegated to do it and we put our heart and soul into it to get that job completed. We bled inside in doing that. There wasn't a one of us that didn't have a special interest in part of that budget process that we ached when we supported cutting it back, knowing full well that it was