

balances there, that we are suggesting they use those funds as opposed to General Funds to carry on their current operations. Within those two funds there are ample funds also to carry on the Technical Assistance Center, if that is a priority of theirs, and Rod Bates, the new director, has said to me, and I'm sure to many of you, that they would like to continue that, and I see that and we, as a committee, see that as a potentially very viable program. The bottom line is that while that 20 percent cut is on the book there, the facts are that we are doing nothing, in the Appropriations Committee's opinion, my very firm opinion, we are doing nothing to curtail the present level of services that the Department of Economic Development is doing and has planned for the current fiscal year. We are doing nothing to prevent or reduce the level of services for the upcoming year. They have the funds within those programs to do all that they are doing and all that they have done, and so far as we know what they have planned to do. We are not trying to curtail economic development in this state. We are not trying to curtail the services of the Department of Economic Development, but rather we are saying use the existing funds. We decided that the Technical Assistance Center is a viable, potential new program, should be explored, should have been used further the last 10 or 11 years, and it has not been. So we are agreeing to this amendment. I would urge its adoption.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I voted against the previous Wesely amendment to provide \$60,000 for the Technical Assistance Center and I voted against it because I read Senator Hannibal's handout. I've got a question of Senator Hannibal. When I read the handout, Senator Hannibal, what I concluded is that the Appropriations Committee at no time ever authorized the Department of Economic Development to operate a Technical Assistance Center, and in fact the Appropriations Committee, in LB 722 passed earlier this year, specifically cut from DED's appropriations money for a Technical Assistance Center, that notwithstanding the intent of the Appropriations Committee and the intent of the Nebraska Legislature, the Department of Economic Development took it into its own hands to operate a Technical Assistance Center, simply shifting money from one source to another. Now is that essentially correct, that they operated outside of the