

Now some of the people who follow tax issues closely around the state, at least in Douglas County, claim that the local elected officials in Douglas County are trying to take advantage of an increase in the property valuations that occurred this year, and they are hoping to try to slip in a tax increase on the people that they hope will go unnoticed because of the valuation, because of the increased valuation. The theory is that there should be a check on government taxing, that the elected officials should be accountable for the taxing and spending increases. So it was my theory also that government should be run in a way that local elected officials make the decisions on the taxing and spending issues. It is with great reluctance that I am working to help bail out these local elected officials who have been so generous with the people's money. I stand here today to advocate a program that will help to take the heat off of these free spending local officials. The reason I am advocating the retention of the homestead exemption property tax relief program is that I believe it is unfair to see property taxpayers in my district and the rest of the state literally taxed out of their homes because the local elected officials have failed to hold the line and to follow the example that we set for them this year of actually cutting back the budget so that for the first time this State Legislature is going to put together a budget that is going to be smaller than the prior year. You have to go back to the Great Depression to find an example of where we have actually reduced our budget from a prior year. Now during this special session we have all felt the great pain that goes with the deep budget cuts that we have been making. It is a job that no none wants to do but we all realize that it must be done in order to help ease the greater pain that comes from our periodic agricultural depressions. We have seen some devastating problems in this state during the past year with Nebraska and Iowa leading the nation in bank failures which are at the highest level in the history of this country since the Great Depression era. We are witnessing record numbers of farm foreclosures and bankruptcies in Nebraska are setting another disturbing new record, up 20 percent this year are the total number of projected bankruptcies this year and they should exceed a record 3,000. With these tragedies we see the pain of families losing everything that they have. As representatives of the people, we must attempt to help the people of this state avoid these devastating problems if at all possible. The people look to us as their