

attention a little bit to the issue. We have county offices through most of the State of Nebraska to service people in need of assistance from the Social Service Department. To save money, under this proposed cut, as I said, 46 of those offices would close. There are both state and federal monies involved. So, when you close those offices you will lose federal money in addition to, and to a greater degree than you will save state money. I think I can talk a little bit first about these offices closing. In one month, as I understand it, they dealt with 5,000 cases of Medicaid and people eligible that came in, 1,000 people for state supplement, a little over 1,000 people for ADC, and about 3,500 for food stamps. We're not talking about a small number of people. We're talking about several thousand people on a monthly basis that would now have to travel quite a distance to get the service which for the urban areas they would have but to walk downtown. Now, this does make it harder. For those who don't like welfare, I suppose that is an attractive item. But if you want to be fair, if you want to be equitable, I think you can raise a pretty strong argument that it is not a wise thing to do for our rural areas of the state. I acknowledge that there may be some efficiencies from cutting these programs. It is always more efficient to have fewer offices, and thus cut some of the overhead. But we've also recognized in some cases in the rural areas, because of the vast distances between towns, that we have sometimes placed offices there to make it a little more convenient for those individuals, not make it quite as hard on them to get assistance. So, I think you are sacrificing equitable treatment for some efficiencies, and I think that equity is a consideration I would ask you to consider carefully. The other cut area deals with NCCY, which is a children and youth program. These are group homes that would be closed down. There is a handout that I have passed out that each of you should have to look at the different impacts of these cuts. There are five different programs that are now out there in terms of group homes for NCCY, two of those would close. It is not certain which of those they are talking about, it could be in Seward, Columbus, Lincoln, Auburn, or Bellevue. I guess that decision will be made later. But, nevertheless, my concern is that these individuals need more, not less, services in communities to provide care for them, alternative living arrangements in communities that can help them get back on their feet. So, to cut in this area I think would be quite negative in their lives. I know a lot of you are probably not terribly concerned about the situation, but to raise the issue and to make a point, I am bringing this amendment to your attention and asking you to consider the