

SENATOR HORGAN: So the only dollars we are really talking about in 516 are the dollars raised through a chili supper or other activities like that?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Yes. Occasionally, you will have bequests, for example, outright contributions. Somebody will just come up and say I think you guys need a hundred dollars. Those are nice people.

SENATOR HORGAN: Yeah, I imagine they are. Do you know, I mean what's the largest dollar amount that we're talking about here? I mean do you have any idea?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: I do not know. I suspect that one of the...well, there is a department in Chadron that has received several generous bequests from estates. Those have now totaled a couple of hundred thousand dollars over the last five years. They have spent all of their money on a new...well, major renovations to their fire hall and equipment.

SENATOR HORGAN: And what public disclosure is there? I mean if we pass 516, the public disclosure, what's the assurance that people have about how these dollars are being spent?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Okay, if 516 passes, the funds, these privately, and I will just characterize them as privately raised funds, although I understand that's an issue, if we don't pass 516, the privately raised funds are not subject to audit procedures, they are not subject to a budget procedure, at least a formal one. I think if you have any experience with these volunteer fire departments and the communities that they serve, there is an audit process but it costs far less than any other one than I am aware of. It costs usually 25 to 50 cents down to the coffee shop, because people watch what volunteer fire departments do with these dollars, and if they have any perception that they are being misspent, they dry up rather quickly.

SENATOR HORGAN: Okay, and then just the final question I would have, in looking at the committee statement, I see that the League of Nebraska Municipalities testified in opposition, are they still in opposition to this bill?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: No, they are not. In fact, as I indicated, with the amendment that I offered, not the committee amendment,