

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, this amendment flies in the face of everything that we're trying to do and adopts exactly the wrong principle. We're talking about equal representation, one person one vote. And that should be the operative principle, not the value of your property. If you're going to say that a person gets extra votes because they pay more taxes, think for a minute about what you're saying. What about counties? Should the people who pay more taxes get more of a vote in county government? What about school districts? Should people who pay more taxes, shall we find out who is paying more taxes and give them...and weight their votes in accordance with the taxes they're paying? I think if you follow that principle to its logical conclusion, you start going the opposite way in American history, back to the time when you had to be property owners to vote. None of us are satisfied with the idea of property taxes and with the idea that we rely upon property taxes so heavily in the State of Nebraska. And I, along with other urban senators, have been in favor of lowering property taxes, and switching more over to sales and income tax, and we have steadily done that during the 1970s and during the 1980s. But to confuse the principles is wrong, to say that because you're unhappy with property taxes that you should deprive other people of a vote, based upon how much property they have is unAmerican, is about as unAmerican a thing as I can think of, is undemocratic. But the thing, I guess, that disturbs me about this whole idea of dividing people up and...and...and holding on to power and not sharing within your community the idea of progress and the idea of moving forward, it's this whole idea of division, instead of bringing people together. If we want to constructively confront the problems that the NRDs are being increasingly asked to confront in this day and age, they must confront those problems as a unified community, cities, and towns, and country all together, working together. And you cannot have that kind of a system, I submit, and you will not get support from the urban areas for giving the kind of support you need to do the job you need to do if you're not giving people an equal vote. These NRDs are not special assessment districts. I think we all understand what a special assessment district is. A special assessment district is when somebody forms a group and they say, for example, we're going to pave your street and we will assess each adjoining landowner a specific proportion of that cost, based upon the benefit that they receive. We do it for paving, we have done it in the past for irrigation, certain kinds of irrigation