

February 21, 1975

SPEAKER: Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, at the present time in my little town of Chambers, or my metropolitan town of O'Neill, or my town of Neligh in all those schools we know exactly what is required for somebody to teach drivers education. We're doing a pretty good job in all of these towns in my district I think. Under this bill we are not going to know what's going to be required, whose going to qualify, whether all of our people who are now qualified and who are teaching are going to become unqualified. We're going to have to lose your driver education program, or go to great expense to meet some state standards because we're going to turn it over to the State Department of Education to rewrite what's required to teach these courses. What I don't think some of the city senators sometimes realize is that driving out in the rural areas is a definite necessity when you reach 14, 15, 16 years of age, whereas, in the cities in most cases driving is generally a luxury up to the time you are 17 or 18. When you tamper with what allows us to drive out in the country, particularly our young people, you seriously jeopardize our economy, our ability to perform works on the farm, our ability to educate our children, and all these kind of things. Now the suggestion has been made that this is only the first step. That LB 24 comes along next and that says that unless somebody has gone through the requirements here they can't get their license till they are 18. I think LB 18 and LB 24 are very closely related. If we pass LB 18 the next step, of course, is 24. So I would urge you to defeat this bill. We're doing the job out in the rural areas now. If Omaha and Lincoln, or Lincoln as I understand it here, has a particular problem then possibly they should address legislation to their problem and not try to tell us how to run the drivers education out there in the country. As I say, we know what our standards are now. We know what's required. We turn it over to the State Department of Education to write new rules and regulations which have been referred to here as "up-grading", well if we're up-grading we're going to eliminate a bunch of our educators that are teaching drivers education now so we're not going to help the situation. The suggestion has also been made here that because there wasn't overwhelming opposition to this bill somehow this indicates it's good. Well I think outside of the city they rely very heavily on the senators who are here to express their opposition to things like this because it's a drive of 200 or 400 miles in for a lot of these people. So Senator Lewis was quite right in saying we're the ones here who are supposed to be lobbying for those people out there.

SPEAKER: Chair recognizes Senator George.

SENATOR GEORGE: Mr. Speaker, in answer to Senator DeCamp's questions that he raised and the definition that there was no overwhelming opposition. There was no opposition. We have had our hearing. The Education Committee is in complete agreement. There was no descent. All we want to do is . . . and I don't know why suddenly this becomes a big issue. All we want to do is bring drivers education into line with any other education, where the Department of Education simply issues a certificate. Why should we exclude driver education and do that by statute? We're just bringing it in line. As Senator Marsh has already explained, over 75 percent of the driver instructors do already qualify. Some of us have to