

the case of all counties in the state. LB 62 is a bill which would call for the restoration of district elections to Douglas County. Senator Newell, in response to a question from Senator Koch I believe, explained why the elections went from district to at large. It was a political issue in the sense of one party or members of a party being opposed to each other and had nothing to do with the merits of election by district as opposed to election at large. I feel that the bill has merit. There was no opposition to the bill at the committee. The only problem arose because due to an inadvertence in the drafting, it would have made the election non-partisan. As soon as an amendment was adopted, which would return the election to a partisanship basis, any opposition which the Douglas County board had evaporated. Most of the arguments were given the other day when we discussed the bill so I will keep my opening remarks brief and ask that this committee let this bill be lifted from the committee and placed on General File.

SENATOR MARVEL: Senator Newell.

SENATOR NEWELL: I won't add a great deal to this but I would like to just mention that again support this bill has had, that the elected representatives in Douglas County, the five elected county commissioners, four of them support district elections. That the district election thing in the past is done by the State Legislature. It's not a violation of any charter or anything and that we ought to at least introduce this bill. There can be some discussion of it later. There can be some more debate on it later but it ought to at least be introduced so it can wend its way through...I thank you.

SENATOR MARVEL: Senator Simon.

SENATOR SIMON: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I'm almost hesitant to get up and discuss it again but the continuity has been such that I think it's important to make one or two comments to those outside the city limits of Omaha. This...or out of Douglas County rather. This bill, which Senator Chambers is proposing to introduce, is not one that's been voted upon the people. If nothing else, I hope this point is clearly stated so that every member of the body understands that. We have had similar issues discussed and voted upon for the city of Omaha but it's never been done in Douglas County. As was mentioned the last time that we discussed, as Senator Koch brought out, Douglas County used to be...the county commissioners used to be elected by district and those commissioners were changed. The procedure was changed by political maneuvering for the benefit of certain individuals. So Douglas County has had a history of having district elections. Certainly, I think has also been pointed out, virtually almost every district in this state with exception of maybe one or two, Douglas County being one of them has district elections. So I think for these reasons, certainly this body should support raising this bill to the floor so we can at least discuss the merits of the bill.

SENATOR MARVEL: Senator Swigart.

SENATOR SWIGART: Mr. President and colleagues. I think it's understandable that the commissioners would favor district elections and it's not uncommon at all throughout the country for those who run for office to have a small a territory as