

to 30, jump right to Section 31. That says "nothing in this act shall effect any law, ordinance, resolution, or rule against drunken driving, driving under the influence of alcohol, or other similar offense involving the operation of a vehicle". What it is saying is that we are not going to take the common drunk, the public drunk, and put them in jail, let them sleep it off, fine them \$25 in cost and put them back out in the street. What it says is that there will be no criminal offense charged against these people...

SPEAKER LUEDTKE: Let's have a little attention so we can get our work done here.

SENATOR BARNETT: ...but that there be no offense charged to these people for being drunk in public, but they will be taken to a place where they will be given treatment and try to make useful citizens out of them again. I know there is difference of opinion on decriminalization. I personally do not think that the Governor himself is violently opposed to decriminalization. I think it is somebody else. But I think that we have to face up to the fact that decriminalization is becoming a part of life. It is doing no good to put these people in jail when they're drunk, let them sit there overnight, put them before the judge, fine them \$25 or \$30, and turn them loose on the street to get drunk again. That is an old way of treatment, which hasn't worked. The other day Senator Lamb, I think, misunderstood me when I said...he asked me what they would do out West. I told him that I thought they probably practice some of this decriminalization already. I know in some western communities, and in Lincoln specifically, Senator Lamb, and I'm trying to make amends for the way you probably misunderstood me, or the way I said it the other day. In Lincoln when we pick up an intoxicated person and we take him to the Detox Center, to the hospital, to a rehabilitation center, if the drunk person gets violent and takes and starts attacking the peace officer, or the law enforcement officer, or if he's involved in a crime, or is suspected of being in a crime, involved with a crime, then we take him to jail. That is exactly what this amendment says. No involvement in a criminal activity will be tolerated. Even when you are suspect of being involved in a criminal activity will that be tolerated. This is for the person that they pick up staggering down the street, sitting in the gutter in need of help. Jail has never proven to be the place of help. Now there is a difference in philosophy probably from some of the people involved in this body. Some of you feel that public drunkenness or being an alcoholic is not a disease. I, personally, think it is. I think that research is slowly showing this, that it is a disease. I will tell you this, if you feel the same as I that alcoholism is a curable disease, I ask you this question with regard to decriminalization. Sugar diabetes, or diabetes is a disease, but yet when a person has an attack of diabetes we don't put them in jail. We try to treat them. Diseases that the people have today in all walks of life are treated medically with help from counseling, with help from doctors, medical associations. Alcoholism is a disease and it is the only one we throw them in jail for having. Believe me and be sincere in this effort. I think alcoholism should be treated, and not by putting somebody in jail. You do not treat anybody in jail. Remember this, it does not eliminate the fact of putting a person in jail or holding them if they're involved or suspected of being involved in criminal activity. I don't know what I can say. I've sat up on the floor here and tried two or three times. I've stood on this floor two or three years