

March 19, 1980

LB 222

SENATOR NICHOL: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I support this amendment, since we have freedom of religion, since we have no laws that say you have to have a doctor. I think this should be in the bill and I support it. Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Marsh.

SENATOR MARSH: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I also rise to support this amendment. It does allow autopsies. It does mandate investigation when there are suspicious circumstances, and yet it gives the dignity to this religious group who choose not to use physicians as a matter of religious choice. Therefore, I would urge the adoption of this amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I am opposed to the amendment. I don't think it comes as a surprise to anybody that I am opposed. I don't think there ought to be anything enacted in the law which is going to be a general provision of law that applies to everybody and then will exempt certain individuals because they say they practice a religion. LB 222 does not prevent anybody from practicing religion. LB 222 does not address itself to religious groups which might say that they feel it is against their religion for any surgical invasion of the human body, whether it is living or dead. That is not what we are dealing with. We are talking about a situation where society has determined there is an interest in learning what the cause of death may be, and although some situations which look like they may be accidental, which may look like nothing wrong has happened, circumstances nevertheless could indicate....and when I say it looks like nothing wrong has happened, a person could just have a hunch and maybe on very whimsical evidence develop the opinion that something ought to be looked into further here, and I think an amendment like this could prevent that from occurring. I don't think the mere words "organized religious denomination" are sufficiently narrow to exclude any group. It doesn't say it has to be composed of two or more members, three or more, or whatever number. So, any organization, any group which will purport to be an organized religion can take themselves out from under the requirements of a bill that are going to be attached to everybody else. Maybe some other person, Senator Johnson, will not belong to any religion, but have an objection to an autopsy on a member of the family because the mere performing of it may