

Hoagland and myself. Request 1665 has been handed out on your desks. Let me read the description and quickly give you five reasons that I think that even though it is late in the session a bill should be introduced to be available to address this issue. The proposed bill would amend existing statutes which govern the Department of Roads bid letting process. Current law does not require that persons convicted of bid rigging reimburse the taxpayers for passed-over charges due to that offense. The bill would require reimbursement to the Roads Department before contractors could be readmitted as qualified bidders on state or local projects which are contracted for by the Roads Department. Reimbursements must also be made to local governments for passed-over charges before readmission as bidders on state contracts. Now, essentially I would say that there are five basic arguments, or five reasons for introduction of this bill. First of all, I am sure we are all aware of the news and rumors with regard to the so-called bid rigging scandal and that we know that it probably involves millions of taxpayers' dollars. Second would be Senator Hoagland's and my contention that since those dollars were taken from the taxpayers from road funds, they should be reimbursed to the road funds and to Nebraska taxpayers. Currently, Nebraska statutes have no provision for such restitution to the road fund and it is very possible... the fourth reason to do this is that it is very possible that many of these cases may be solved between the end of this session and the start of next session in which case it would not be possible for the Legislature next session to establish qualification since the crimes already would have been tried. So it is very important that there be action this session. The reason that we are going for introduction of a bill rather than amendment is to allow an opportunity for a public hearing on the issue so that the proposal of Senator Hoagland and I can be evaluated in public life. So for those five reasons I would suggest that although it is unusual to introduce a bill at this time, it seems the best course to take.

SENATOR NICHOL PRESIDING

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Mr. President and colleagues, as Senator Fowler has indicated, this bid rigging problem, of course, is something that just come upon us. Late last week I am sure a number of you read in the newspaper that one contractor from west of Lincoln was given 60 days in jail and his firm, his construction firm, was