

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this is a little bill that essentially recognizes a de facto situation in the juvenile court in Omaha. Down there right now they have what is called an "associate judge" who, for all practical purposes, does the same thing and has the same workload as the juvenile court judges themselves and what they are asking to do is to make this associate judge a real judge. Now this is a bill that we had last year, that the Legislature passed last year without controversy. However, the Governor vetoed the bill after the Legislature had adjourned for the reason that it does entail an additional seventy to ninety thousand dollars in state expense because this particular associate judge right now is being paid out of county funds and there are certain expenses that will switch over to the state. That is the down side of the bill. However, everything else is very positive. I might mention to you that the bill last year had two sides to it, one side was the provision that prevented presiding judges from appointing associate judges in the future. That was a situation that we wanted to remedy and we did remedy that last year because that particular provision was switched over to the muni court merger bill and it will become law shortly. Now this is the other side of it though and that is making the associate judge at Douglas County, this applies only to Douglas County, making that person a regular judge. Now when I say make that person a regular judge, I really mean creating a judgeship because the person who presently fills that position will not necessarily be appointed to it. The regular nominating process will go into effect, and from those nominations, the Governor will appoint the person who will fill that position. Now as a practical matter, I would not represent to you other than the fact that probably the person filling it will be appointed but that is, of course, completely the prerogative of the nominating commission and the Governor and the person presently filling that position is willing to subject himself to that process. So, essentially, that is what the bill does. It has the support of the Omaha Bar and the Supreme Court, the judiciary generally, and Senator Labeledz and I would move that it be advanced, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, a