

over. That motion to indefinitely postpone is now pending. That is offered by Senator Ashford.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Ashford, please.

SENATOR ASHFORD: I would move to withdraw that motion at this time.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Motion is withdrawn. Senator Chambers, the Chair would recognize you to explain the bill.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, this bill is about as straightforward a proposition as we will ever have before the Legislature on a subject as serious as this one. It would abolish the death penalty. In the case of a first degree murder, the most harsh punishment that could be imposed would be life, and in those situations where the circumstances justified it and the right degree of murder was proved and the person convicted for that and sentenced, the laws related to parole would be suspended so that such a person could not be paroled or even be eligible for consideration until he or she had served a minimum of 30 calendar years. That currently is a longer period of time than a person convicted of first degree murder serves in Nebraska. The average is about 17 years, and some are released sooner than that. No person, by the way, convicted of first degree murder and released on parole in Nebraska has ever been returned to prison here for any reason. So the argument need not even be made that we are dealing with people who are convicted of first degree murder, arrested, sentenced, locked up, released, and then they kill again, and again, and again. They have not been returned for any purpose. This is a very difficult subject to deal with because it involves the state taking the life of one of its citizens. For your information, no female has ever been sentenced to die in this state, let alone executed. No wealthy person, no politically prominent person has ever been subjected or even exposed to the death penalty in this state. If you go through the 20 persons who were executed, they are generally young, poorly educated, some were transients, but none were what would be considered upstanding members of the community who had any political clout such as the gentleman who killed a lady with a lamp a few months ago and was convicted of manslaughter, and he felt that the sentence was too harsh for him. Had that been a run-of-the-mill citizen, murder very likely may have been charged, and had it been charged and the person convicted, in view of the social status of the victim, he likely would have