

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Abboud. Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I was one of the co-sponsors of the kill motion on this bill and the reason I did that is because I oppose abolishment of the death penalty. And in my 10 minutes I will state the reasons why. A majority of Nebraskans support keeping the death penalty. I think all the polls show that it's favored by a large majority. Nationally, I believe it's around 72 percent that supports it. I took a poll a while back from some of the...some of my constituents and I think it was about an 84 percent saying that Nebraska needs to keep the death penalty. I feel that abolishing the death penalty in our state would deny ourselves a major weapon in the battle against violent crime. We need to keep it. We need to keep the death penalty because it would deter crime. I have never seen a dead man person commit another murder. I feel that we need to strike back at those vicious criminals. Enough innocent lives have been lost in Nebraska. You are going to hear supporters say that the death penalty is inhumane. Isn't premeditated murder inhumane? Let me describe many cases to you where I feel it has been inhumane. Let's consider and discuss the stabbing deaths of two Sarpy County boys back a few years ago in 1983. Consider how he tortured, how he tortured them before he killed them, how they pleaded with him to let them go, but he killed them anyway. They didn't have a second chance. He tied and gagged them and then he stabbed them. And I don't want to go on with that but most of you people have read in the papers and heard on the news of the bizarre events and that was really inhumane. Not too long ago a man was executed in Mississippi for the crime of smothering a three-year-old girl. A three-year-old girl, he smothered her after raping and torturing her. I think it can be assumed that the little innocent girl gasped for breath and suffered immensely when she was deprived of air. The difference is that little girl did nothing to deserve her suffering and her death. Most of the methods of executing killers are far more merciful than the methods used by the killers to earn their place on death row. Many killers torture and torment their victims, like I have described to you in the cases...in the two cases. They, the victims, are subject to long, painful deaths. These killers sometimes kill entire families, forcing them to endure the unspeakable horror of seeing each other die. Senator Chambers recently said it was inhumane to electrocute a criminal and in this bill before us he wants to give them a mandatory 30 years