

message to drug dealers that they are not welcome in this state. It also sends a message to the youth of Nebraska that you support us in our attempts to avoid drug use and abuse. It even sends a message to all Nebraskans that you recognize the magnitude of the problem in our state and that you are ready to act." With that, I would urge you to support my amendment which could hopefully help prevent this insidious form of child abuse and protect the weak and defenseless children of Nebraska. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion on the Johnson amendment? Senator Landis, would you care to discuss it, followed by Senator Chambers.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. I do agree very much with a part of Senator Johnson's analysis here and that is that the law has every reason to distinguish in this situation between the harm done an individual and the harm done a child. It is quite common for the law to make that distinction and the distinction is a rational one, that while there may be a criminal intent and a criminal motive, and a reason for punishment where a wrong is done to an adult, when one is subverting an individual incapable of creating the capacity to defend themselves or to argue in opposition or to physically defend themselves and compel a child or persuade a child to do that which is against their interest, and which may scar them for life depending on their own personal strength and their ability to respond to adversity, the law certainly permits the idea of a greater penalty when an act imposes a wrong on a child. And for that reason, I rise to support Senator Johnson's amendment. On the other hand, it, by very clear relief, calls into question what is a difficulty in the bill that it is being amended onto, because while Senator Johnson's distinction between the age of the victim is a sensible distinction, one in which penalties should be increased, the distinction on geography in 976, in my estimation, is not a rational distinction. The crime is to sell mind-altering, life-threatening drugs to kids. If that is done on a school yard, if that is done in the doorway of a church, or if that is done in a basement of a private home, the quality of the crime is no different. The evil is no different, and in my estimation, the punishment should be no different. What is legitimate is the age of the individual, how impressionable they are, what is at risk for them, the fact that they are more easily misled and subverted, the fact that they have less of an