

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 4, 2001

LB 242

politician as much as any of these other individuals, and the university has what I would call, pardon the expression, brothers and sisters, but this word is often used in church. The athletes are put in a hellish position. Everybody makes money. Ministers make money and it's not evil. When the preacher gets money, it's not evil. Inmates are paid for their labor in Nebraska, and they are criminals, but they get paid because it's thought that a person should be compensated for labor rendered. The Bible even says the workman is worthy of his hire. And for those who may not understand that, muzzle not the ox that treaded the corn. If the ox is treading the corn, let the ox not wear a muzzle but let it eat some of what it needs to give it the strength to tread out the corn. I have tried to find ways to help these athletes. The Legislature one year passed a bill that said when a majority of the schools that make up the athletic conference of which Nebraska is a part, when their Legislatures have passed a similar bill granting a stipend to the athlete, Nebraska's athletes would get that stipend. This kept Nebraska from standing alone and it also would bring pressure to bear on the NCAA showing that those of us who represent all residents of this state recognize athletes as residents, too, not indentured servants, not a class to be set aside and treated in a way no other students are. We wouldn't dream of saying that a student who is taking journalism could not be paid by the Lincoln Journal or the World-Herald to write and do reporting work for them while a student. We wouldn't think of saying that a student majoring history...in history could not be paid for doing research for a professor for the historical society or anybody else. We would not say that if a student who is taking physics and transfers to another school cannot take physics the first year there. But all of those things are done by way of restricting athletes. If you are an athlete at the the university, not only can you not accept money in exchange for work, you cannot even accept a gift that somebody wants to give you if it's not a member of your family. But here's what you can do as an athlete. If you are an athlete on scholarship in football, you can be a professional baseball player and not lose your eligibility in football because they don't want to drive you away from the university altogether. They want to keep you there to exploit you, and that's all it's about. I shouldn't have to have done this, but