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LB 215

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Chambers, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I could not let Senator Smith's comments go without some kind of response. He said the bill...the amendment came up suddenly. When this bill was on General File, I raised the issue there. And it was at that time that Senator Smith said he believes in discrimination based on sexual orientation. So the issue did not catch anybody by surprise. There have been bills before the Legislature and in committee discussing discrimination based on sexual orientation. I read something in the paper this morning that was so demeaning and disgusting that I will speak about it now, although I wasn't, had not Senator Smith opened the door. Some preacher, pretending not to know what this amendment deals with, said that it could relate to somebody feeling justified to engage in bestiality, polygamy, pedophilia. This will not legalize any of those things, which are crimes. And for the people that Senator Smith has been working with to demean the people who are gay and lesbian, I think, is absolutely wrong and unnecessary. If they're going to argue on the issue, argue. But those people come before the various committees and they speak of gay and lesbian people as though they are animals, less than human. And for them to do this kind of thing I think is reprehensible. I handed out a packet this morning of information. One of the articles dealt with Creighton University recognizing a gay and straight organization of students. The president of Creighton said that it was a stand against discrimination, pointed out that there is nothing in Catholic teaching or the Bible which justifies discriminatory attitudes or behaviors toward gay and lesbian people. The university was applauded for taking that stand. The executive director of Catholic Charities in Omaha, who could have remained silent, wrote a letter, and you all have had copies of it, supporting LB 215 with the amendment, pointing out again that discrimination is wrong, any discrimination. When these people say that they don't know what the term sexual orientation means, they immediately bring up gay men and lesbian women, so they know. They are liars on top of everything else that they are. When I was talking to Senator Smith about this on numerous occasions, I pointed out to him that one of the worst things