

March 19, 1979

LB 59

the vote on adoption of the amendment suffice if...

PRESIDENT: Particularly since Senator Chambers said he would seek an Attorney General's opinion we withdraw it if...if the matter were declared to be not germane.

SENATOR MURPHY: Like the fellow says, now let's don't start that.

PRESIDENT: Well I know how you like to have things go to the Attorney General, so that's...alright, the Chair recognizes Senator Chambers. Proceed.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, the other day I thought that LB 59 would come up, and at that time I circulated an article that appeared in the World Herald. It was based on a conference that took place at Creighton University in honor of the Year of the Child, and it dealt with the way teachers are not really competent and comfortable in dealing with handicapped children. There is a principle abroad in the land now known as mainstreaming where handicapped children, wherever possible, are put in a conventional or traditional classroom setting, where they are not isolated or put apart. It was stated by some of the people who voted to kill LB 63 that such a provision as I'm offering would not be necessary because the schools are adequately dealing with this problem related to the dealing, the handling of handicapped children and the subject of the amendment that I'm offering. Some of the language in this article, and it was dated February 24, 1979, by a Margery Hartnett, an Associate Professor of Education at Creighton, that there are teachers who feel very uncomfortable about being with these children. Some types of training programs have to be initiated for these teachers as well as support systems. So if we start at the top with the teachers who handle these situations, and they themselves are not capable of properly dealing with them, I think the Legislature is acting very responsibly and properly by acknowledging that a problem relative to handicapped children does exist in this state. I have often on this floor and in Committee made appeals for the proper dealing with people who are locked up in penitentiaries, or criminals. Now if we can be concerned, at least I am, about how people who have violated the law are treated, and to make sure that their human dignity is not stripped away from them totally, despite having committed a crime, then how much more so should I be concerned about those children whose only "crime", the only crime is that they were born with or later developed a condition that we describe as a handicap. How is it going