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LB 345

change if they choose to do so in Douglas County, should that option not be honored rather than the proposal to make the change legislatively here by statute in the unicameral?

SENATOR NEWELL: Senator Stoney, that is a good question.

SENATOR STONEY: Just quickly.

SENATOR NEWELL: Yes, let me say that in the past it has always been made in the unicameral. It has been changed four times in the last twenty years and it has been basically political considerations. This time the county board is two democrats in favor of the change, one democrat opposed and the only republican on the county board is in between. He is in favor of his friends and his friends are on both sides of the issue. So let me say that it has never been done by an election. It is a great expense. I think that it is necessary and beneficial and for that reason I have offered this bill.

SENATOR STONEY: Thank you, Senator Newell. I think that the major point that Senator Newell makes here is that the county does have the option if they wish to do that, to do it presently without the intervention of the Legislature. Another point that he makes is that this has been political and four or five times in the last twenty years we have made the change from an at large to a district election, back and forth and I am wondering if this is just another exercise in futility. Additionally I see no provision in the bill that provides for the division of these districts or establishment of boundaries and I am wondering if Senator Newell, once again, could respond since that can become a very political issue also as to who would make the determination as to the boundaries in this district if we chose to elect our commissioners by district in Omaha?

SENATOR NEWELL: Senator Stoney, as is with most boards or commissions, the county commissioners will themselves draw the district boundaries. Now I couldn't think of any other way to do that and allow for the political input. We could draw the map here in the Legislature. I think that would be wrong and I think it would be very difficult. It would not be an ongoing thing. So the commissioners do it as they do in every other county in the state.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute, Senator Stoney.

SENATOR STONEY: Thank you, Senator Marvel. I think most