

April 3, 1979

LB 484

hired as political campaign workers, and they should be insulated from the pressures of political campaigns. Now, this bill, this amendment is an attempt to balance the civil rights of public servants who need to be able to participate in the electoral process against the need that we all have to protect the integrity of that electoral process, and what Senator Sieck and I are advocating here is a slight abridgement of those civil rights by prohibiting them from participating in sheriff's campaigns in the county in which they're employed, which is justified we feel by the need to insulate them from the kind of political pressure that I think we all know takes place and have experienced ourselves. Let me emphasize again, if this amendment is adopted they will nonetheless be able to participate in any other political race. They'll simply be prohibited from participating in the race for who's going to fill the position of their future boss as county of their particular...as sheriff of their particular county, and I would urge your support in adopting this amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wesely, Frank Lewis, Sieck, and Chambers. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: I'll be quick. Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I rise in support of the Hoagland-Sieck amendment to LB 484. I think that it's the step we ought to take at this point to make that bill really work in the way that we want it to work, and that is to deal with the problem that has happened in this state in several elections in the past, and particularly in Lancaster County last year, and I rose last week to speak to that issue and to point out some of the problems we had here last year. When Peter...Senator Hoagland, I should say, described this amendment, he talked about the problem really is with an incumbent sheriff who's running for reelection and forcing his deputy sheriffs to work for him. Well the problem in Lancaster County last year wasn't that at all. It was that there were two candidates that were not associated with the sheriff's office and they went in and they got support from the different deputy sheriffs and still coerced and forced some support from them and some work from them and against state law. State law prohibits any political activity on the part of deputy sheriffs. So that law wasn't being enforced. It was violated. It was ignored, and I think that we need to have this restriction, because there's that potential for coercion and subversion, and I think that the Hoagland amendment very much deals with that central problem, and