

April 5, 1979

LB 365

I sure have the inclination to go along with it but I would like to get some input from the Omaha people just what their feeling was.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Koch, do you wish to be recognized on the DeCamp amendment?

SENATOR KOCH: I'd have to offer the same kind of concern as Senator Warner. I read all these polls that suddenly come out and show the citizens of Omaha absolutely in favor of this but they did offer them a couple of other choices. They just offered them garbage tax, payroll tax or an increase in property tax and I submit to this body if we are going to be treating Omaha on promises like we have been that we might as well just give them the right to levy a sales tax and get it over with and let them do it in perpetuity, but then when they do that, that same body is going to say like they did a year ago, look what we did. We reduced our millage by two mills because we are indeed a very frugal, outstanding group of responsible elected officials. The Legislature received very little credit for making that possible because we had the sympathy and the empathy to do it. By the same token, if you check Omaha streets, they look like they have been in a war zone. They have had complaints filed against them all winter long by people who own automobiles and in some cases the courts have said the City of Omaha will pay for the damage to your car because of the condition of the street. So I submit it is going to be easy for the council and the mayor, once they get this kind of a windfall, to go away from the property tax which is a painful tax and continue to say to the people we are lowering your property tax but we are still providing you with a sound, fiscal government. But if we are going to say until 1983, I concur with Senator Warner. We might as well just put it on the Board and say you go to the vote of the people and you can keep it until they reject it and don't come back to the Legislature again and I would remind you also a year ago this body played around 394, which was Senator Lamb's bill, and it was always interesting that every other city from that time forward had to go to the vote of the people to even attempt to get a sales tax privilege. And one last thing is that every time we allow a sales tax to be levied at local level you are indeed stifling the quality and capability of state services because as soon as you start talking about some very beneficial programs to be carried out by the State of Nebraska you run into a conflict of interest at the local level and citizens say, my