

April 18, 1979

LB 143

CLERK: Senator Venditte moves to return LB 143 to Select File for specific amendment, that amendment being to strike the enacting clause.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Venditte.

SENATOR VENDITTE: Good morning, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. A lot has happened since I introduced that particular motion on LB 143 but I thought I would just simply inform the members of the Legislature the rationale that was included in that particular motion to return LB 143. Some of this may be somewhat repetitive. I think a great deal of this is new information that perhaps members of the Legislature were not informed of at the time when the bill was heard on General File as well as Select File. But I think it is important to reiterate some of these concerns that are afforded people in terms of their due process when paying their utility bills and I can only speak for Douglas County. I would suspect that this is a concern of Douglas County and really no other county in the State of Nebraska for the most part, but for example at MUD and OPPD in Omaha which services, I know MUD services some in excess of 200,000 people or customers, and no matter, no matter what the reason, they will never shut a customer off for a minimum of sixty days. Now what is the dispute. We are talking about a dispute here. Well I have a dispute every time I see that bill each month. You know on those very grounds in itself I guess I would be exempt from paying my utility bill and, gosh, I am sure everyone of you people in here know how expensive utility bills are these months, especially with the kind of winter we had this winter. At the end of the first month, a notice is sent to the customer telling that their payment is delinquent. For example, if a customer did not pay their bill, then they will get a second bill the second month, the subsequent month, and inform that particular customer that they are delinquent and they will be shut off. Now remember now, there will be an additional thirty days tacked on. They will not be shut off again for a minimum of sixty days. When the next bill is sent, a forty-eight hour notice is sent telling the customer the shutoff will occur if the bill is not paid. OPPD and MUD will follow the same procedure. Due process, ladies and gentlemen, what more do you want in due process. I have always seen this bill ever since it came to us as a bill for the deadbeats of our community and you know we have those kinds of people, people who will go in and say they are Mr. and Mrs. Johnson or Mr. and Mrs. Venditte or whomever, but Mr. and Mrs. Johnson or Mr. and Mrs. Venditte don't stay in that place very long. They are gone maybe after sixty days and the utility company can't find those people.