

May 15, 1979

LB 262

of Pardons steps in and does their work and you can't tell me from fifteen, twenty years from now that couldn't happen. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, it is evident to me that this bill will probably advance, however, I cannot sit here in good conscience without expressing my firm opposition to this bill. I believe that this Legislature will be making a serious mistake if LB 262 is advanced. Now this is a very difficult issue and one of the problems with this issue is that both sides fail to realize that the other side is concerned with the preservation of life. In the balance we have the life of an innocent victim and the life of a convicted murderer. There are people who feel they have proof that capital punishment is no deterrent to crime, yet I ask how would statistics show the number of people who were frightened and discouraged from committing murder because of the fear of capital punishment? The Los Angeles Police Department, reputedly one of most progressive law enforcement agencies in the country, conducted a study in 1971 on the efficacy of capital punishment as a deterrent. Over 50% of those persons interviewed who were arrested for violent crimes said that they did not carry lethal weapons while committing their crimes because they feared the death penalty. Who knows how many lives were saved because these criminals did not carry deadly weapons? I believe that people of our communities are tired of crime and the laxness of our courts. We need to be responsive to the desires of our constituents for justice. When the issue of abolition of capital punishment was put to a vote of the people of Illinois in 1970 they rejected the proposal by a margin of almost two to one and I submit the polls show that Nebraska is in a similar situation. We must now use our reasoning and judgement in deciding whether capital punishment has saved innocent lives through its deterrent effect. If even a few deaths of our law abiding citizens are prevented, I submit that is a valid argument for the retention of capital punishment in Nebraska, therefore I urge you to oppose LB 262 and thus keep capital punishment in this state.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I will keep my remarks brief but I do want to talk just