

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say at the outset that I appreciate the remarks of Senator Cullan. I appreciate the remarks that Senator Barrett made when this bill was up earlier and I appreciate the remarks of a number of other rural legislators have made in support of this bill and I appreciate the votes that a number of rural legislators have given this bill previously because I think that those rural legislators understand that this bill is clearly in the best interests of the State of Nebraska. Now, Senator Murphy indicated earlier, he said what is the problem, why fix it? Well I think we clearly have a serious problem in the way the Supreme Court boundaries are drawn presently. As I indicated before all of the lawyers of Lincoln and half of the lawyers of Omaha are lumped into one out of six districts and I have some statistics here furnished by the Bar Association which indicates that approximately 1,350 lawyers out of a total active number of lawyers practicing in Nebraska of 3,200 are lumped into one out of six Supreme Court Districts which is about 40% and that clearly is unfair. Now Senator Murphy indicated earlier that I had misstated the position of the House of Delegates. Now I want to correct statements I made earlier for the record and I have been corrected since earlier debates. When this was before the House of Delegates previously, Senator Murphy, this was passed without dissent. Nobody dissented to the passage of the authorization for the Bar Association to lobby on behalf of this particular bill and the fact that the House of Delegates authorized this without dissent was confirmed as recently as this last weekend at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bar Association. Now Senator Murphy also asked what this bill is really about. Well as I have indicated earlier, this bill is about two things. This bill is about, number 1, taking the gerrymandering out of districting for districts for the Nebraska Supreme Court and if you look at a map of the current districts of the Nebraska Supreme Court you can see that gerrymandering has clearly taken place to the disadvantage of both the Lincoln and Douglas County legal communities. A serious job of gerrymandering has been done very much to the benefit, incidentally, of Senator Murphy's area, very much to the detriment of attorneys in Douglas County and Lancaster County and I think that we don't want to be playing the politics with the drawing of districts of the Nebraska Supreme Court and this bill would take care of that. Now the second purpose of this bill is to give fair and equal representation on the Nebraska Supreme Court to every major population group in the state and I think that the sincerity of the sponsors of this bill is evident in the position of opposition that we took to Senator Warner's amendment. Now Senator Warner's amendment would have required that all judges be taken from the state at large which would not have guaranteed