

March 27, 1980

LB 741

by the way, circulated a petition to force the city council to allow them to vote on a proposition that says they can decide who their neighbors will be. If they don't want certain people to live in the neighborhood, they take...you have got to go to them and ask them is it all right for so-and-so to buy a house and the council refused to do it because their legal counsel told them it was unconstitutional. These people then took it to court and a judge told them the same thing. You cannot do this even with a vote. The Legislature did not give the City of Omaha the right to deny people the right to live in a neighborhood and that cannot be passed onto you by the council giving it to you for a vote. So we are talking about some fundamental principles here but I think all of the things I have mentioned you already know. Now there was a situation which was brought into focus by a number of polls that the World Herald took. One indicated that the majority of Omahans now favored district elections. Well, look what is being proposed here. The Legislature last year spent the time and the money to pass a bill which gives what the poll said is wanted. Now Senator DeCamp and Senator Labeledz, and I know Senator DeCamp has a lot at stake in terms of his ability to get the Legislature to do certain things that it is not inclined to do so he has a lot at stake on this, and I think it ought to be made clear and I sympathize with him. If you put your feet in the fire you don't want them to be burned too long, but if you risk it all and go out there on the limb, then you can't expect everybody to come along with you. Twenty-five members of the Legislature voted to put 329 in place which required district elections. Now you are being asked to repeal that law. Why are you being asked to repeal it? So that the matter can be voted on, additional expenditure of public money since that is what everybody says they are concerned about, and do you know one of the people who submitted a copy of the poll for your consideration, and not today but the other day, indicating that a majority of the people want district elections, some of the very people who favor the repeal of the bill that gives district elections. So we are going over the same ground repeatedly. I don't think I have to tell any of you how strongly I favor the district concept, the necessity that I see for it. We were given the same arguments when the issue of school board election by districts was before the Legislature. We were told that the school system would fall apart. Yet district election by the school board is not even discussed in Omaha any more, it is taken as a matter of fact. The very people who opposed it, why Senator Goodrich's wife was the chairman of the school board and he opposed district