

January 14, 1981

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Dworak, do you wish to close on your motion?

SENATOR DWORAK: Mr. President and colleagues, I do not believe changing the name in the rules from "Chaplain" to "Chaplain Coordinator" is going to greatly enhance entanglement of church and state. I believe that the majority of the people in the state their sentiment is that a period before the legislative session begins be set aside in recognition of a power greater than human power is acceptable and not offensive to the majority of the members of this body but certainly not mandatory that anyone be present prior to the opening of the session. I think it is a tradition of this Legislature, of this Unicameral of the State of Nebraska that should be preserved. I would urge that you adopt the amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Chambers, your light is on. Do you wish to speak?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Yes. Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I would like to correct what I think is a misapprehension here. When they have that prayer that is a part of the session, Senator Dworak. It is in the rules and the rules must govern that which occurs within the context of legislative sittings, so the prayer is a part of the legislative session. The rules of the Legislature do allow for the compulsion of attendance of anybody. However, that has never been attempted to be enforced but the prayer is a part of the legislative session, and I would like to touch on something Senator DeCamp stated earlier, that you should not do anything you are doing because of that court decision. So let's accept that, and let's say you look at this matter on its merits, what does this praying and this religion mean to you? We can say anything that we want to but what does it actually mean to you? If it is a holy and a sacred thing, why do you take that which is holy and place it in a profane setting and the one carrying it out says it serves a secular purpose which is not to honor and glorify God, which is not designed to elevate anybody's mind so that they think high thoughts and are encouraged to place noble righteous deeds but rather to make the Senators be quiet? That seems to me to be a contemptible use for something which is supposed to be holy. If I respected another human being, I would not misuse that human being in that fashion. So if the prayer is not serving a religious purpose, why do you have it? And if it is serving a religious purpose, whose purpose and whose religion? The Catholics and the Protestants don't worship the same God. All of the Protestants don't even