

February 6, 1981

LB 143

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I would oppose the Chambers amendment for a number of reasons, but I think Senator DeCamp did indicate I think quite rightly that, in fact, with the amendment we do lower the speed limit on the Interstate in the State of Nebraska from what is essentially in a hidden way 65 down to 60, and I have opposed raising the 55 mile per hour speed limit, but you see my vote in support of this bill which supposedly would increase the speed limit, while, in fact, quite frankly Senator DeCamp hit it right on the head, in fact, we would be lowering the speed limit and I think that from 65 to 60 is a wise step to take. I think that we were conducting a sham on this state by having the lenient penalties that we have on speeding on the Interstate. I think we should have been upright and forthright and should not have done that in the first place. But I think this bill is more justified. I think a 60 mile per hour speed limit is with the penalties that there are for speeding above that probably a wiser step to take policywise for the state than what we presently have. However, ultimately I think the 55 mile per hour speed limit is justified and should be continued. I think if you will look at polls across this state, although many of you feel it is a very popular thing to support raising the speed limit, I think polls will indicate, in fact, there is a great deal of support, perhaps a majority support for keeping the speed limit at 55 miles per hour. There are a number of reasons for that and you have heard many of them discussed already. But nevertheless I think the most fundamental point and the reason I would oppose raising it is because this all came about when the energy crisis hit and we all decided we had to do something, we had to make some sacrifices in order to save this country from a very major disaster with energy and so we cut back and we cut back from 65 to 55, we cut back, in fact, from 75 to 55 on the Interstate. Now it seems to me that energy crisis is still there. We are still paying exorbitant prices for energy. The problem is not going away and yet we are starting to ease up a little. Sure, this is a step that many of you can justify but it is a step in a direction I don't think we should be taking at this time. The need to deal with the energy crisis is not past. The need to deal with the fact that some sacrifices have to be made in order to save energy because of the crisis that we are in still should be recognized by this state and I think to ease up at this point is wrong. It is an indication that we aren't willing to make a sacrifice to our international community,