

March 6, 1981

LB 174

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Johnson, do you wish to close on your amendment?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, I do, Senator Clark. Just a couple of minutes. I don't have with me, members, the actual uninsured motorist statistics that the state compiles annually but they genuinely are horrendous with approximately twenty percent of the individuals that are involved in automobile accidents in this state not having insurance coverage for the automobiles which is a very large amount of uninsured motorists. However, not every one of those individuals is going to lose his or her driver's license but the statistics that are quite revealing are that of the numbers that lose their drivers licenses, very few voluntarily turn the drivers licenses in, very few. I mean it is in the hundreds rather than the thousands, and so what happens simply is that these persons who (a) were at fault for the accident, (b) irresponsible for their insurance coverage, and (c) liable in damages are able to continue to drive without at least having had their licenses picked up. Now if they are stopped, if they are stopped by a law enforcement official and if the official does the computer check, assuming the computer is then open during the daytime and it is not a nighttime stop, he can discover that their license has been suspended. But I think if we want a financial responsibility law to mean anything, we have got to make certain that it works well and so all I did last year is to say, "Look, sheriffs and police officers and constables, when you are directed to pick up the licenses, go do it and we mean business." Now right now every law enforcement official is subject to this law. Any county attorney or prosecuting officer, sheriff, mayor, police officer or police commissioner or other officer who shall willfully fail, neglect or refuse to enforce any law which it has made his duty to enforce shall thereby forfeit his office and may be removed therefrom. That is a pretty stiff law that sits there. So all we did last year with the financial responsibility law was to say, "Look, local law enforcement official, it is your duty to pick up these licenses when so directed to do so, and if you don't do it, you can lose your office just like other officials can lose their office when they neglect to perform that which is their legal duty to perform." I respectfully ask this body to adopt the amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: The question is the adoption of the Vard Johnson amendment to 174. Those in favor vote aye, opposed no.

CLERK: Senator Clark voting aye.