

March 18, 1981

LB 17

this before their fellow voters. So, ladies and gentlemen, I would ask that you consider very, very carefully the Koch amendment which would increase the present statute which is 5% for individuals that wish to petition their government to a 10% which is a doubling. I think that the real intent of this proposal is to make it much more difficult for the citizens to be able to provide to be able to carry on through the initiative petition process and I think this is a very, very dangerous precedent for us to establish. Remember again, the state Constitution of Nebraska provides for 5%. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Newell, we are speaking to the Koch amendment to LB 17.

SENATOR NEWELL: Yes, Mr. President, members of the body, I would like to just say that it was my hope and I thought it was pretty well worked out in the Revenue Committee that we would try to get as close as we possibly could a consensus on this provision. I talked to Senator Carsten and Senator Koch about various proposals and when I offered the 7% proposal I had discussed it with Senator Koch and I thought he was going to accept it. Now let me just explain briefly what we have done here because it is not just moving it from 5% to 7%. If it was then I think we might have a real good argument but what we really are doing here is simply this. The original bill said it was 5% of those people who had voted in the last election, had to sign petitions. Senator Koch changed that to make it registered voters and that is the way the situation is now. We raised that to 7%, down from his original proposal of 15% but I think a reasonable figure. So frankly, even with the bill the way it is now, the way it is right now with the committee amendments, it is twice as hard to get the signatures as it was before. Senator Koch, adding more to that would make it even harder so I have to support Senator Stoney and rise to oppose this. I think we will have a pretty good fairly good consensus if the committee amendments are adopted. I think the bill will sail through and get probably 45 votes if the folks are here if we don't try to tinker with it too much and so I would encourage you not to accept the Koch amendment. I think we will get there and we will do a good job with this bill without that. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would take exception with Senator Koch's observations as he is comparing apples to oranges. He quoted percentage figures to recall people that are elected and this amendment pertains to dollars and not people to elected office and I think there is a big difference. 7% might be low. I intent to support the bill but I feel inclined to go along