

April 2, 1981

LB 125

end literally eliminates from our total public dialogue any conversations, any meaningful acts with respect to sexual practices. Now one of the things that I feel very strongly about is the fact that our young people, our children, our teenagers, are engaging time and time again unfortunately in sexual practices that wind up with young women becoming pregnant, and those young women, some women will have abortions, some will give live births. But by and large the studies that have been done of our society, American society, have shown a variety of things. First, an unplanned for pregnancy by a teenager will wreak educational and economic devastation on that teenager. Second, the poorest people in society today are female headed families, where there is one parent and it is the woman. It very clear that what's happening in our society today is that we have too many children coming into our world too early for their young mothers. And one of the things that you and I do by constantly sweeping under the rug the public discourse on sexual practices, and I look at this legislation as doing the same, is that we fail to reckon with the true social problem, and that true social problem is, are young women becoming pregnant too early. We ought to be living in Ireland where young men and young women just don't have these problems until much later in life, but we don't, and this is a major social phenomenon that we need to address. This legislation, by precluding any kind of publicly compensated abortion coverage, continues again as a beacon, as a symbol to those would want very simply for us not to provide any useful information in schools to teenagers, to those who would not want us to reckon with what is happening to our young people, to continue not to reckon with that problem. And I think that we shouldn't allow that to occur. Secondly, we all know in this issue that there are people on a lot of different sides. We all know that this has been a very divisive issue socially in our society. But it so happens that in some parts of Nebraska, such as Lincoln, for example, it could well be that a majority of taxpayers will be willing to see their public employees have insurance coverage which would allow for abortions where necessary. But this bill, LB 125, precludes those folk from having that kind of a choice. In other words, the State Legislature has literally made that type of choice for local people. Now we do that all the time. In fact, yesterday on my mobile home bill, one of the arguments that Senator Cope made against the bill was the fact that it tended to intrude on local option, on local control and local choice. Now I would agree with that. We do it all the time. But when you deal with an issue which frankly has seared the

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