

April 6, 1981

LB 87

SENATOR HIGGINS: Yes sir.

SENATOR WESELY: Senator Higgins, what is the basic thrust then of these amendments? Are you trying to provide for an opportunity to still go through the process of finding some facility to take care of these people but you are just concerned with the fact that some of them just won't help them and so before. . . what is really the thrust of the amendments and who brought them to you?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Well, the problem that we have had in the past is that the police, in their attempt, we are talking about the hard core derelict from downtown Omaha and my district borders downtown. In the past when they would take them to some detoxification centers the detox centers would say we are full, we don't have any room. Hospitals would not treat them because they were afraid of malpractice, and the police waste so much time from going from place to place to place, that with these amendments instead of taking them to those places they will be able to telephone those places, that have shown in the past, a willingness to take the intoxicated person and say we have this gentleman here and he is freezing to death and he is cold or he is laying in the middle of the street. Would you take him? What it would do is number one it will save our police officers an awful lot of time, and we have a shortage of policemen anyway. Number two, it will save gas so we are not burning up all of that gas going from place to place to place. Frankly, it has gotten to the point in Omaha where the police they know by heart who will not take them so it is easier if they can just pick up the phone and call the ones that would take them and say we have a gentleman or a woman here, would you accept them, or do you have room?

SENATOR WESELY: Is this amendment supported by say the Omaha Police or any group or are they just drafted on your behalf?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Just a second and I'll give you a list of who supports. I have here Senator Wesely a letter from the Lincoln Center Association saying that they approve of LB 87, it says, "Lincoln Center Association is a non-profit organization of retailer's, property owners, and other businesses working together to insure a healthy vital central business district. We feel that this bill can only aid us in achieving our goals and urge its passage." The Thurston County Sheriff's Department, the sheriff himself wrote a letter saying that he supported 87. The Nebraska County Attorney's Association, "I received a copy of LB 87