

April 29, 1981

LB 134

apply the law across the board and if we make it a tight law, you are going to find this sort of a procedure will become almost routine. There will be many instances where committees will be organized to influence legislation to direct it to the Legislature and other bodies and there will be no accounting where the funds come from or how they are disposed of. I think that this closes a very important loophole and I think that all of you ought to be aware because if you are not I want you to be aware that the reason I am introducing this amendment is because a certain individual for whom I have great respect has taken on a campaign in opposition to a project which I happen to support. He is apparently raising money. He is spending money. He is buying full page ads in newspapers and ads on the radio, and there is no one who can require him to show the proof of where the money comes from or how it is being spent. The ads encourage the public to contact their Congressmen and express their opposition to the project. I think this is a direct....I know this is a direct attempt to influence legislation. I do not think it should be outside the scope of the accountability law. I think it should be included. I believe the amendment does include it and I think it is important that it be added to LB 134. I have some other amendments which I think also will tighten down the procedure. I think it is important that they be viewed in their own context so I am offering them separately. But I think it is important...extremely important, as has been pointed out on this floor by Senator Higgins and several others recently, that we make the law apply to everyone who has anything to do with political activities. I would like to give you a little example, for instance. This kind of a committee can exhort the public to take action against an individual legislator. There is no way in the world you can find out who your opponent is, who is financing the campaign, or what the sources of their income might be. I think that in that case we have...where we have a legislator who is under strict accountability for reporting all of his income and expenses, those who would influence the Legislature should be subject to the same kind of reporting. We have reporting procedures for lobbyists and I think they are desirable. I think they probably could be improved upon also, but we have left this kind of gap in the law and I would certainly hope that we plug the gap. Now there are people who say that the Legislature is high and mighty and doesn't want to be informed or contacted by the public, but that's not true. We encourage the public to contact us. We hope they will. We want