

May 13, 1981

LB 129

simply did not exist. So if the philosophy of decriminalization of intoxication is ever going to work, then we have to back up that philosophy with the treatment facilities that we need. And so as you may know I introduced this bill originally to reinstate intoxication as a crime, but the Legislature and the Judiciary Committee rejected that philosophy. So now we should proceed with the second best alternative, that is to increase alcohol taxes and then support the appropriations bill which will send those funds for the improvement of alcohol treatment programs in the State of Nebraska. The one comment that I would like to make is this, and that is that LB 129 does not...does not earmark funds at all. Those funds will come...and those programs which we have will come under the review of the Appropriations Committee each year and these funds are not in any way earmarked. I would also like to say for the record that is in part of the compromise that we reached with representatives of the liquor industry on behalf of Senator Nichol and myself we agreed that we would not endorse, introduce nor encourage the raising of alcohol taxes for the next three years. And so with that understanding I think we can ask you to vote to increase the taxes on alcohol and hopefully when the A bill is drafted and introduced, you will support the appropriation of those funds to alcohol treatment programs throughout the State of Nebraska. Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: A question of Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR KOCH: Senator Cullan, was this subject matter properly heard in committee after we rereferred it?

SENATOR CULLAN: The subject matter was reheard. The Judiciary Committee held a special hearing on the increase in alcohol taxes. The alcohol industry did appear and opposed the increase tax at the time.

SENATOR KOCH: And as a result of that hearing, you were able to arrive at a compromise?

SENATOR CULLAN: After that hearing the Judiciary Committee advanced the bill without the compromise. They advanced the bill and then later we visited with representatives of the alcohol industry and agreed to a reduced sum.

SENATOR KOCH: And one further question for a reminder to the body, when we first discussed this amendment to tax the industry, that action was more or less taken on the floor as an amendment to the bill, was it not without a public hearing?