

May 21, 1981

LB 273

SENATOR VICKERS: Yes, thank you, Pat. Mr. President and members, I apologize for taking up the time to return this bill from Final Reading but I think there is a policy decision that we are making here this morning that we should be aware of and that policy decision is simply this. The State Claims Board of the State of Nebraska at the present time is made up of three elected officials, the Lieutenant Governor, the State Treasurer and the Auditor of Public Accounts. Now those are elected by the public and they serve on the State Claims Board that where members of the public can come in and ask for reimbursement if they feel they have a legitimate case against the state. Now we are changing that in LB 273 in Section 18, page 14, so that the State Claims Board will be made up of the Director of Insurance, the Commissioner of Labor and the Director of Administrative Services. Now I have got no argument with LB 273. I have got no argument with the idea that we are going to set up a risk management program and the State Claims Board can hire a risk manager. The rest of the bill is all right but I do have a problem with the fact that the State Claims Board will no longer be directly responsible to the public inasmuch as they will not be elected officials but instead be appointed officials and I think that is a bad policy decision that we are making and I urge the body's adoption of this amendment to go back to the present policy that we have where the State Claims Board is made up of those officials that have to face the electorate as they are right now. Now I think this is an important decision to be made and I would hope that the body would adopt this amendment, to pull 273 back for this specific amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Rumery, do you wish to speak to the motion?

SENATOR RUMERY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would like to see us support Senator Vickers on this motion. I think if we have any one fault in state government in Nebraska is that we have drifted away from giving responsibility to elected officials. I hope we can bring this back and make this correction.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Maresh.

SENATOR MARESH: Mr. Speaker and members, I, too, support the Vickers amendment...I mean the motion to bring this back. We work with the Claims Board and we find them responsible people, elected officials, and I would hate to see going to appointed officials so I will support the Vickers motion.