

to prior Legislatures and to the judges that worked on that code at least before we jump in and change a half a dozen provisions in it without a public hearing, that the least we should do is have a public hearing because I suggest to you that we are going to discover when we have a chance to look through these carefully, that there are a number of things that are taken care of or a number of things that were not rightly understood. So I ask you to reject the amendment or if there is some mechanism of getting this back to the Judiciary Committee for a hearing before we adopt it, either that or put it off until next year. Go ahead and adopt the bill in the original form that has had a public hearing, do that much this year and wait for the rest of it next year until we have had a chance to thoughtfully and deliberately review what is being suggested. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Before we proceed with the discussion, underneath the south balcony it is my pleasure to introduce on behalf of Senator Nichol, is...Senator Nichol's guest is Robert Simmons, Jr. of Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He is a member of the Board of Regents. Bob, will you move out so we can see you? Okay. Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I have to admit that I am very torn by the bill and by the amendment, and I have yet to totally conclude exactly how I want to go on either the bill or the amendment. And the reason I am so torn is this, I think that we in our society today are observing an increase in violent crimes. I don't think society wants and deserves and needs any increase in violent crimes, and I think that we as a society need to take every step we can to continue to protect our societal members from being victimized by violent crimes, and that includes those persons who are working in our penal facilities who have the safekeeping and custody and care of our inmates there. They too need protection from violent crimes. And what Senator Pirsch is attempting to do in this bill is to stiffen our penalties and to at least give our law enforcement officials the assurances, the assurances that if a violent crime on their person is committed, the offender will be punished, the punishment will be a severe punishment and the punishment will serve as a consecutive and not concurrent sentence. And I tend to be very sympathetic with that point of view because I absolutely deplore violent crimes in our midst and I don't care where or midst is whether it be in the penitentiaries, in the jails or on the streets. But you and I, fellow legislators, have a tremendous problem in our society. We have a problem with the way we are treating criminal offenders. Do you realize that this