

January 8, 1982

LB 403

SENATOR VARD JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I understand why Senator DeCamp is deferring to me. I talked to Senator Don Wagner right before lunch and he said, you know, coming back into session and just starting right out at full tilt is a little like starting your car with the motor running at full speed and you have the brakes on, just take the brakes off and the car just shoots forward, and sometimes it is difficult to get the memory working again as to precisely what we were doing. So I can...as to what that bill is all about, so I can appreciate Senator DeCamp's deferring that to me on this bill graciously. LB 403 I introduced last year to add two additional grounds to the existing real estate licensing statutes with respect to revoking the licenses of real estate agents. The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard the bill and offered committee amendments to the bill which effectively eliminate one of the two grounds for...one of the two grounds I put in...for revoking real estate licenses and altered the other ground in probably a more meaningful way. The committee amendment when adopted would provide this. Among other reasons why a realtor's license could be suspended or revoked would be if a realtor engaged in the following conduct: "Inducing or attempting to induce a person to transfer an interest in real property, whether or not for monetary gain, or discouraging another person from purchasing real property by representing that (a) a change has occurred or will occur or may occur in the composition with respect to religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, or marital status of the owners or occupants in the block, neighborhood, or area, or (b) such change will or may result in the lowering of property values, an increase in criminal or antisocial behavior, or a decline in the quality of schools in the block, neighborhood, or area;" Now if the amendment is adopted, that is exactly how the bill itself would read. The basic purpose of the bill is to address certainly an urban problem which simply is racial steering by realtors, of persons who wish to buy houses steering black families essentially into neighborhoods that are all black or partially black, steering white families into neighborhoods that are all white. It is a practice that has gone on for some period of time, not lawfully, but it has gone on. As part and parcel of the Omaha school desegregation case that was tried in 1974, there was a tremendous amount of testimony concerning racial steering. The court, in fact, found that racial steering existed in Omaha. There was a study that was done a year ago by a neighborhood housing coalition in Omaha found that there is still racial steering going on. Now what this sanction does is it makes it very clear to realtors of the world that our Real Estate Commission will not countenance

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