

I know so many teachers that either drink, and I drink also, or smoke pot which I haven't tried, in this instance I am going to say, I think I would like to see it mandated that we do teach the youth the evils of smoking, something I learned when I was about 18 and I still haven't got smart enough yet to quit. But I do think that this is something that ultimately will save the state a great deal of money and I think it is more important that our youth learn the disadvantages and how it can hurt their own individual health by taking up the habits of their elders. I think it is more important that they know how to take care of themselves than who wrote the polonaise or who painted the Mona Lisa, so for this reason I ask that you support Senator Sieck's bill.

SENATOR CLARK: Is there any further discussion? Senator Sieck, do you want to close?

SENATOR SIECK: Yes. Mr. President, members of the body, I would like to answer some of the questions of Senator Vickers' and Senator Haberman's accusations. What this bill says it goes in the curriculum. It does not yet mandate the public schools that they have to do this, but it is going to be available for them to do it, and I think that is what we must see that it gets in there. It still does not mandate that that public school has to do it. But I feel once it is in the curriculum, they will recognize the need of it and will do it. So you talk about mandating programs, I don't think this is mandating. All it is mandating is that it gets in the curriculum of the health education, and it is asking our State Board of Education to see that this is done, and that is mandating that portion of it. I would like to say that President Nixon was the first national figure on the national level to follow this fact. If we only use the information that we now have available, we could prevent one-half of the mental retardation that occurs. Now the State Department of Health estimates that 27,350 children were born in Nebraska in 1981. Using the national average we can estimate that 3 percent of these children were born with mental retardation. That is 820 children. Yet if the prevention information that is now available had been used, 410 of those children could have been born without mental retardation. We have two problems, one is to make the prevention information known to our children prior to the time that they start having children. The second one is, once they have the knowledge it is up to them to use it. We cannot mandate that. We can ensure that they have that information and that is what I am trying to do. The adoption of LB 423 would give more Nebraskans the opportunity to be born healthy. It would