

There has been no problem brought to me by any priest or any member of the clergy. There has been no problem brought to me or shared with me from any doctor and every doctor in the State of Nebraska has been under this legislation since 1973. There has been no lawyer who has come to say he or she had a problem because of our current legislation and there has been no member of the press to report that I spoiled a story because the current legislation says if you know of abuse or suspect abuse you have a responsibility to report. When this has been law since 1973 and no one has had a problem with it, why change it? But the reverse is true. If the amendment is adopted, then 90% of the physician reports may not be available when the doctors are no longer required to report abuse. Only those individuals who feel a very strong personal commitment would then do so and I trust that many of my physician friends would be in that category but until we had protection in our law, Senator DeCamp, until we had the protection for the doctors in the original legislation of 207 back in 19XX, we had very few reports coming from doctors. Now under current legislation 90% of their reports are validated with something being done to stop the abuse for the adult or the child. No problem has developed. Why is it necessary to suddenly change this section? You see if the amendment is adopted it reflects not only in the new section of the senior citizens but it also affects the child abuse legislation. I urge you to vote against this amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Labedz.

SENATOR LABEDZ: I would like to say that I disagree with Senator Higgins, which I don't often do, but as a member of the Legislature for some unknown reason and I think you probably know the reason, I have to go to confession every month and I'm sure you know the reasons why.

SENATOR CLARK: We can understand that you know.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Yes, and I admit that I go every month to confession because I go to communion on Sunday. I also agree wholeheartedly with Senator DeCamp as far as where we say in the amendment or in the bill that they "shall" report. That means that the clergy shall report and how far are we going to go with that? We just passed a shoplifting bill. If I go to confession and confess to the priest that I was shoplifting, are we going to say next that he is going to have to report that or any other crime? I certainly hope that this body will see fit to exempt the physicians, the attorneys and the clergy, especially the clergy. I am most concerned about that and definitely will not support a bill that will force the clergy to report any abuse. I think the bill as it stands is wrong. The amendment is definitely necessary and I hate to disagree with Senator Higgins but I will have to