

March 4, 1982

LB 628

SENATOR WIITALA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I rise in support of Senator Landis' amendment to the Peterson amendment and I wish to indicate here that I support Senator Peterson's amendment with the exclusion of that portion which Senator Landis wishes to amend. If you will refer to LB 628, you will notice in the language that what Senator Peterson intends to do by striking the opportunity of women to participate in athletic programs, it does not say in the existing language that they must have an identical program to those that boys have. It just says comparable. For instance, if you have got a wrestling program going for boys, it does not necessarily mean that you have got to have a wrestling program going for girls. Being a teacher the last sixteen years and looking at the situation historically, I would just like to tell the body what a difference it has made to give girls equal access to the same educational opportunities that boys have had for decades. Now we all know the importance of sports, what it does to an individual. Every coach, every male who has participated in sports can attest to that. It gives you a sense of competitiveness, develops yourself physically. It gives you a sense of independence, confidence, honor and all of the other requisites, skills and ethics and morals that go into the game. The sad thing about it is that historically those same skills have not been inculcated into girl students and so I think it is very important that we maintain somewhat of a comparable program in the field of athletics and sports that the boys in our schools have been privileged to participate in for a great many years. I feel so strongly about it because these skills that are gained from competing in sports carry over into the classroom academically and I would be the first one to testify what this has done to female students in the school system as far as a renewed confidence about handling subject material in their classrooms, confidence of being able to speak up in a class, confidence of competing and debating over questions which was never there before those athletic programs were offered to them. So once again, members, I would hope that you would support Senator Landis in his amendment and then you can continue to support Senator Peterson with the rest of the amendment that he offered. Thank you.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Landis, do you wish to close?

SENATOR LANDIS: Are there no other lights, Mr. Speaker?

SENATOR CLARK: No, there is no other lights.

SENATOR LANDIS: I would move the adoption of the amendment,