

March 9, 1982

LB 652

way that the law is structured, please pay close attention to this, the way this law is worded they can do that. It says here all they have to do is declare the requirements embodied in the law constitute an interference with religious instruction. It does not say that they have to hold as a religious belief that interference in education is a violation of their religious belief. That might preclude Catholics and Methodists and all the major groups from trying this kind of waiver because their long continuing history has shown that they do not object to it as a matter of religious belief but that is not what this bill says. It says "interferes with religious instruction" and I can see where it is going to be very easy for the lay body of one of these groups to say, "oh, boy, this bickering with the Department of Education, enough of that. They're interfering with our religious instruction because they are taking our teachers time and our administrators time worrying about these teacher certification requirements and we should be teaching the kids some religion. They would come under the statute. I don't think there is any lawyer that would say that they wouldn't come under the statute. Then, once it spreads across the table to private education, where are the public schools? In what kind of position are they, vis-a-vis, the public schools? Will there then be pressure to do away with teacher certification on the public school level?

SENATOR NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: I think, in fact, that if you reverse the trend by adopting this amendment in any form, that you are inviting serious problems and at the beginning of those problems are already evident by what you have seen in the course of this debate in the last year. Thank you.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Remmers.

SENATOR REMMERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I really had not intended to speak on this issue at all because I was a little afraid that due to my experience in education that what I might say might weigh too heavily on one side or the other but my conscience compels me to speak on this thing. I want to congratulate Senator Koch for his perseverance and his efforts on this bill. Regardless of where you are on this issue I think you have to give him credit for having stayed with it and I want to say this, that I have a lot of respect for the public schools. I've spent too many years in it not to have respect for it. I don't think the public schools deserve all the criticism that they have been getting. I think basically the public school system has been