

the businesses that were impacted by these petition drives were the ones who wanted this bill. It was stated at page 22 of the hearing report, the transcript, that these businesses wished to counteract citizen initiatives. In other words, they are trying to stop the citizens from having these initiatives because the businesses don't want to be confronted with these types of issues on the ballot. It was also stated that these businesses are concerned because the citizens are making too much use of the initiative petition. So my response to that was this, a constitutional right is considered to be all right by some politicians until the people begin to exercise it. The right to petition was put there for the citizens to use. We as a Legislature should not now seek to restrict that right simply because citizens are starting to use it. That is why the bill was brought to us. Neither Senator Hefner, nor Mr. Radcliffe, nor the paid person from this organization that wanted it was able to point to a single abuse of the initiative petition system in the State of Nebraska. This lady who testified wanted to say that you should not let people outside of their own county circulate a petition in a different county. You should not let them be paid their expenses for circulating such a petition outside their county. So then I asked her, "Are you coming here from Denver voluntarily?" She said, "No." I said, "You are paid to come here?" "Yes." "So you can come from outside the state paid to do so to petition the Nebraska government but a citizen within the state cannot do so." Well, she was a little puzzled, not really puzzled. She knew what I was getting at. And here is the point that I was making, that this business group paid a person to come from outside the state to try to get the Legislature to agree that citizens within the state cannot go from one county to another to do what she came from outside the state to do. A person in one county could have an interest in a matter that is of statewide concern, and as Senator Johnson pointed out like to circulate petitions in other counties. A person's citizenship does not end with the boundaries of his or her counties. So what this bill would attempt to do is let a business group who has got headquarters in Denver send a paid representative to this state to get the Legislature to pass a law that would say citizens inside this state cannot exercise the right of petition outside their county. I think that is pernicious and I think it is wrong. Not only does the Nebraska Constitution protect the right of initiative but the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution guarantees the right of citizens to petition their government for redress of grievances. We should not enact any kind of legislation that is going to restrict that right. And I do not believe that a legitimate basis is shown for