

March 24, 1982

LB 761

state aid for Driver Education but I am not opposed to Driver Education. Budgets have been set up, teachers have... schools have their plans. They have their programs. I think it is irresponsible to try to change that at this time. I think we should reject both amendments.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Vard Johnson, do you want to close on your amendment to the amendment?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes. Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I do not dislike Driver's Education. I think Driver's Education is a useful program. The real question is, should the State of Nebraska continue to provide monies to the support of that program when we have a lot of other needs for state funds? And I come down on the side of saying, no, the time has come for us not to put money into Driver's Education programs given the fact that we have other major state offerings that are competing for dollars. And I really think that is part of what the appropriational process in these difficult economic times is all about, making choices, choosing to fund one offering over another offering, and we don't fund one offering because its efficacy no longer is as good as it once was because we think we have needs that are greater than other things. Now, Senator Koch indicates that Driver's Education is a very useful program to people from poor families because their parents do not have automobiles or they do not have the gasoline money to assist these young persons in learning how to drive, and these young persons accordingly can take their driver's instructions in a school at public expense and they can learn to drive and once they learn to drive they can then obtain jobs and they can become usefully productive. I don't disagree with that. I don't disagree with that, but one of the things that has been happening to an awful lot of our young people in the last five to six to seven years, and we certainly have discussed that on this floor, is that more and more of our young people are taking jobs, are taking jobs to the detriment of their education. And it strikes me...they are working in fast food chains, they are working in grocery stores, they are working in a variety of places, and it strikes me that maybe we ought to think twice about continuing to support a model which encourages, facilitates young people to choose employment which will then mean for them they can buy their own automobiles and their own clothing and a lot of the other things they need over education. Now that is sort of far afield from this whole issue of the Driver's Education program, but when Senator Koch indicates the Driver's Education program benefits poor people who in turn can get jobs, I think that we ought to recognize that