

April 1, 1982

LB 761

metaphors, take that sword and divide the Gordian knot. Thank you. I hope you will support this amendment.

SENATOR NICHOL: We have an amendment to the amendment, but before we take that up, Senator Carsten has 48 students in the North balcony who are 4th graders from Nehawka, Nebraska from the Conestoga Elementary School. Mrs. Parson and Mrs. Myrtue are the teachers. So would you stand up and be recognized, those of you who are left? Thank you for coming to the Legislature. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Higgins would move to amend the Chambers amendment to LB 761 by inserting (read Higgins amendment found on page 1568, Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Mr. President, I offer this amendment because \$26 million is a lot of money and as we know road construction about 50% of the cost is labor, and Director Charlie Benson said that one of the problems at the penitentiary is that we just don't have enough work or things for these people to do. So I think this amendment would be a good way of saving the state half of the cost if they do choose to adopt Senator Chambers' amendment. At the same time we would be providing work for the men in the penitentiary and the women, too, for equal rights, and they would be given the opportunity of learning new trades like how to mix concrete and how to run the heavy equipment, and at the same time, they would be doing a service to the community so they would be making reparations to some degree for the crimes they have committed. So my amendment merely states that the Chambers amendment, if adopted, should have in it that anyone convicted of murder or rape, and we can even amend it later to include all crimes, that they do their time at hard labor rather than sitting in the penitentiary with nothing to do, and they can contribute to the building of the North Freeway. Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR NICHOL: I have a couple of lights on. Does anyone wish to speak to the Higgins amendment? Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, this is one of those enlightened ideas relative to penal reform that catches my fancy and I think it is a good idea. If some of the people in the penitentiary perhaps had a trade at which they could have earned an honest living, they wouldn't be there in the first place, and the things Senator Higgins said about Mr. Benson's concern about idle time on the hands of the inmates is true.