

April 7, 1982

LB 757

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, I will move that we adopt the amendment.

PRESIDENT: Motion is to adopt the Warner amendment on LB 757. Now, discussion. Senator Chambers, you were first on the list.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, we are at that point now that people had been discussing when we were adding additional taxing authority to the City of Omaha and are being asked to add it to Lincoln. You add burden on top of burden in terms of taxes and pretty soon there is a situation that people cannot very well bear up under. Because the fact that another half cent tax would mean five cents on the dollars in Omaha would cause me to vote against this particular proposition. There are sales taxes on utilities, sales taxes on food. These are essentials, necessities that people cannot survive without. The utility companies have not shown themselves very sympathetic toward those people in the winter who can't afford to pay their utility bills. The amount of those bills have increased dramatically just this past winter, so to add additional cent and a half... an additional half percent of tax is a little more than I can agree to go along with, and I would advise those Senators from Lincoln to think before they would vote for this proposition. It has been argued whenever the cities were seeking additional taxing authority that the sales tax represents the taxing base of the state. I think what Senator Warner is doing is consistent with his philosophy. I won't even talk about the timing, whether the Legislature ought to do this, anybody else. The point I am getting to is that there are certain essentials that are going to be taxed beyond the power of some people to reach. I know that people like Senator Kahle, Senator Cope and others who have been against taking the tax off food have always talked about those transients who pass through, or that the people who are rich can afford to pay more tax on the rich meals they take in restaurants. But I think what we have to look at when taxes are levied is the individual who is the individual who is the poorest and the least able to pay the tax. Since poor people pay a disproportionate amount of all of their income for food, that means that the tax is going to impact on them far more heavily in terms of the amount of money they have. Because of that I have always been against the tax on food. I am reluctant to vote for any tax that will increase the amount of this tax on food. So based on that consideration alone, I cannot vote for this proposition and I think there are others who should give it some serious thought. You may go for this amendment.

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