

April 8, 1982

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hire people or reimburse people for their expenses. On April 12, of course, all the disclosure statements are due for everyone running for state office, Governor, Legislature, and other offices, and we are going to find out then how many people have hired staff on their campaigns or how many people are reimbursing expenses. Now I am not involved in Governor Thone's reelection campaign but I will be willing to wager that there are one or two hired people that are working for him and I will be willing to wager that there is some expenses being reimbursed. You know when the Congressman in Omaha, Hal Daub, ran for office two years ago, he had three or four people working that were salaried people. He gave bonuses to four or five other people after the campaign was over. A lot of people were getting reimbursement for expenses in political campaigns at the legislative race, Congressional race, gubernatorial race, and it ought to be the case. As long as those things are disclosed, there is nothing wrong with reimbursing people or paying people to work on campaigns. We have been doing it for a hundred years in Nebraska and for two hundred years in the United States. Now what Senator Hefner's amendment does is it applies a double standard. It says, well, we can reimburse campaign volunteers in our campaigns, but if somebody is circulating an initiative or referendum petition, why it is suddenly illegal to reimburse for expenses. Now it is already illegal in Nebraska law to pay people to circulate petitions. I think that is wrong. There is also a provision in Nebraska law, and I have an amendment up here to Senator Hefner's amendment to cure that, that requires that circulators be bonded if they are going to circulate petitions outside their county of residence. Now I happen to have worked in a statewide initiative campaign four years ago, and let me tell you that bonding requirement creates a serious impediment. I have had to deal with that. I have had to buy bonds and get people bonded to circulate petitions and it is an impediment to that great right that we have in Nebraska that we have had since 1912 for the people to write their own laws through the initiative process or to repeal legislative statutes through the referendum process, and Nebraska was the second state in the Union, back when the Populace ran this Legislature, to create a constitutional right to initiative by way of a constitutional amendment. We were the second state in the Union to have the right of initiative and currently there are only about 25 states that have that, and it is a unique right. It means that people of the State of Nebraska can write their own laws in extraordinary circumstances by writing them and gathering an adequate number of signatures and putting them on the ballot and voting on them and that is a very precious right. It is one of the most fundamental democratic rights

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