

April 8, 1982

LB 520

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, I did. You know, I am speaking to a kill motion and one of the things that I distributed this morning is a letter from parents whose child was killed. Can you imagine what it must be like to put your child with somebody else, to pay the fee to somebody else, and to get a phone call sometime during the day from the police department telling you that your child has been killed? And you know what it must be like to find out that the reason your child was killed was because your child was being carted somewhere by this facility in a car and the car had a broken safety latch on the back door, and the owner had propped the door shut with a stick and another child had removed the stick and your three year old child tumbled out into the path of oncoming traffic and was killed? But that is only one. I believe that we are engaged in a long-standing struggle to assure ourselves as a society that when parents for whatever reason put their children in the care of others that at least those care-givers will be protective of the children. How many of you read Charlie Dickens years ago? How many of you read about the incidents in England and London in 1830 and 1840 on baby farming when working mothers would have to give their babes to other nursing women, farm them out, and their babes would die? How many of you read about child labor in this country in the 1870s and the 1880s and the 1890s where working parents would have to take their five-year olds, their six-year olds, their seven-year olds, put them in our New England mills, put them in our mills because they didn't have the money? And the children would die an early death. Or put them down in the coal mines to pick up the little nuggets of coal that the grown men couldn't reach? You know, it wasn't until 1916 that we passed child labor laws to prohibit that type of a practice. It is a long-standing progression and now we are at a point where we have lots and lots of single parents and lots and lots of working parents where we are basically compelled by economics to put the children in the care of others. And all I am doing with 520 is establishing a reasonable regulatory scheme to at least provide some assurance to those parents and to those children that the facility in which they find themselves will be safe, healthy and protective of children. Now I have a long...you bet, Senator Stoney alluded to it and I think Senator Peterson alluded to it, I have a long-standing rationale for what I think needs to be done with child care. I think the first thing you need to do is you need to improve the licensing standards. I think ultimately you need to improve the quality of offerings and you do that through a voluntary...a voluntary accreditation process. I think we also need to assure ourselves that low income people have the

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