

November 11, 1982

LB 1

CLERK: (Read the record vote as found on pages 56 and 57 of the Legislative Journal.) 11 ayes, 29 nays, Mr. President.

SENATOR LAMB: The amendment fails.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment I have is offered by Senator Cullan. The amendment is actually offered by Senators Cullan, Clark, Stoney, Pirsch, Carsten, VonMinden, Nichol, Howard Peterson, Hefner, Lowell Johnson, Kremer, Duda, Sieck, Remmers, Wagner, Beyer, Apking, Chronister, Fenger and Richard Peterson.

SENATOR LAMB: The Chair recognizes Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, this amendment is one to reduce the appropriation to the Nebraska Educational Television Commission by \$73,131 for costs associated with coverage of the Legislature. There are 21 individuals in the Legislature who cosigned this amendment. I think it is appropriate that in a time when we prioritize that we look at this particular function. I think we have a philosophical choice. There may be some other areas with the state where we may want to make some minor additions to this particular budget and this will free up \$73,000 to accomplish that objective. I personally believe that perhaps some of this money could be used so that the impact on the State Supreme Court and Judiciary is not so strong, perhaps for Community Mental Retardation Services, and there we have a choice between coverage of the Legislature and those services which affect people. I think it is a prudent philosophical decision. I would like to believe that the private media in the State of Nebraska does a sufficient job, in fact a very good job in my estimation of covering the Nebraska Legislature, and therefore there is no reason to supplement the efforts of the private media by providing public funded coverage of the Unicameral. I am committed as I believe this Legislature is to an open and free legislative process. We have I think when you look around the country perhaps one of the most open legislatures anywhere. The press has free access to the floor. They have free access to committee meetings, even the Executive Sessions, and so we have an open, an outstandingly open system and I do not want to jeopardize that system at all. But I do not believe that it is necessary to have public employees make decisions as to what should or should not be shown. I think that is a function for the private media supported by private revenues not by the public. I think that there is just as a matter of making selections as to what is and what is not shown in the program a method of affecting public opinion, and I think that is not a proper function of state government to use taxes for those particular purposes. Secondly, I believe that, and finally I believe that it would be a much more relaxed atmosphere in the Legislature without the continual presence of the cameras and the lights and other things. I think that would be a benefit as well. But again I think all of us are committed to an open and free Legislature. We simply don't believe that the taxpayers of the State of Nebraska should pay \$73,000 for this particular coverage. Thank you and I urge you to adopt this amendment.

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