

November 11, 1982

LB 1

SENATOR BEUTLER: Is it known where Senator Schmit is? Is he in the building?

SENATOR LAMB: They are looking for him right now, Senator. Senator Schmit is on his way, I am informed.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Why don't you start the call then, Mr. Speaker.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. Clerk, call the roll.

CLERK: Roll call vote. 19 ayes, 27 nays, 3 excused and not voting. Vote appears on page 58 of the Legislative Journal.

SENATOR LAMB: The motion is not adopted. The Call is raised.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next motion I have is offered by Senator Higgins.

SENATOR LAMB: The Chair recognizes Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you Mr. President, colleagues, this is an amendment you can all vote for. It is not cutting anybody's budget, it is not hurting anybody. It is just going to save the tax payers some money. I'm sorry I didn't have time to get it copied for all of you but this is what the amendment says. "When any government agency, commission or board holds a meeting, conference or seminar that they be required to hold such gatherings in state, city, county or school buildings where there is no charge for the meeting rooms or where the charge is less than a private enterprise would charge them". I want to tell you how I came to write this amendment to the budget bill. Last summer I attended a seminar given by the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. It was held in a private motel where they had two meeting rooms. Of course, the cost came out of the budget for the Office on Aging. There were forty employees there at that seminar; state, city, county and perhaps some of them from United Way agencies. If you take the average six dollar an hour wage which many of them were more than that you have a cost of \$1,920 just in wages for those forty employees to attend that seminar. It was a brain picking, storm picking seminar. At 4:00 the leader finally said, now that we have all met in these two private rooms that we have rented and had our lunch, what do we want to come out of this seminar? Now can you imagine having a meeting and not even knowing what the purpose of it is? Except to gather forty employees together to spend eight hours and probably more than \$1,900. What my amendment is intended to do is to mandate that whenever any government agency has to hold or desires to hold a public meeting or a seminar or a conference they use the facilities available to them at no cost that the tax payers have already built and paid for. For example. The City of Omaha will allow us any government agency or board to use their legislative chambers and conference rooms provided you give them enough notice so that they are not already taken. We have about eight public libraries in Omaha all of which have meeting rooms and they too have said that they would be free for any government agency or even a community organization to use. The State Office Building has conference rooms available

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