

March 1, 1989

LB 340

balcony. They are from Senator McFarland's District. We have 50 third and fourth grade students from Hawthorne School in Lincoln and five teachers. Would you folks please stand and be recognized. Welcome to the Legislature. We ask that you please not lean on the rail. It is a little bit low and we don't want any of you to fall over the edge, so thank you for coming and we are glad to have you here. You happen to be here at a very interesting time so I am sure you will find it interesting. Thank you for visiting us today. Senator Chambers, would you like to explain the bill.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, because I think the bill has been fairly well covered with the addition of the committee amendments, I am going to answer questions if people have those, but I would like to make a few preliminary comments to put in context what it is that we are dealing with. I had given out a handout earlier, some days ago, that had a listing of newspaper articles showing where remains of Americans and others had been returned for an appropriate burial along with an appropriate ceremony. One related to bones of 1812 war vets that were found in Canada and were returned to this country, and even though they couldn't be traced to a specific family or a specific tribe, they all were reinterred in a respectful manner. In Germany, there had been some construction projects where the bones of Jewish victims of the Holocaust were discovered. They were all turned over to the Jewish people for an appropriate burial with an attendant ceremony, and there was no saying that this one may have belonged to the tribe of Levi and we have no Leviites alive. This was the tribe of Benjamin, this was the tribe of Judah, none of that was done in that instance. All the bones were returned and appropriately buried because the remains of human beings have been treated with a certain degree of reverence since about 100,000 years ago. I don't know that from personal experience. I read the latest or last week's edition of U.S. News and World Report where they had a story trying to trace the development of human beings and they mentioned that on their chart, that deliberate human burials started 100 years ago. So the idea of reverence for the dead, even sometimes to a greater extent than the person was revered when he or she was alive, is not new. I have not a religious profession that would put me in a position to try to appeal to anybody's emotions, but having read a great deal, having been religious at one time in my life, I do understand what people mean when they talk about those things that are spiritual. It means that they are nonphysical, not material. They transcend this world that