

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Over seven ounces. Thank you, Senator Abboud.

SENATOR ABOUD: Yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Members of the Legislature, remember, keep what I am saying separate from the fact that Senator Abboud brought the bill. He is not an expert on this issue. Nobody on the floor is, but the law enforcement people who gave him the bill are, and if they are trying to get a punishment set for a specific level of drug possession, they should have given statistics on how many arrests they have made to show that that, indeed, is a problem. We know that the larger amounts constitute a problem, but they feel that by coming down here and getting a bill passed by the Legislature, they can say, by god, we are fighting the drug problem. We got the Legislature to impose harsh mandatory minimum sentences. Will they make the arrests? There were some police officers accused of having been involved in drugs, and the chief, and some people in the police division where disciplined,...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...he didn't even want to let the public know who those people were. Big drug deals produce large amounts of money and there are people who are behind this nefarious activity whose hands will never be soiled with the crack or the cocaine, itself. They will hire minions who will hire youngsters to carry out the dirty work and you will find the Omaha Police cracking down and arresting youngsters, teenagers, and others who are the symptoms and victims, themselves, rather than the ones who fund the drug traffic and make the big end of the money. I am going to have to put my light on again because I don't want to run over. I don't want to be stopped in mid-sentence, but I do want to say this. This bill, if it is passed, with a 50-year mandatory minimum sentence is not going to touch the drug problem in Omaha or anywhere else.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Motion on the desk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Ashford would move to amend the bill. (See Ashford amendment on page 1233 of the Legislative Journal.)