

April 3, 1989

LB 592

amendments to LB 592 be adopted.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Shall the E & R amendments to LB 592 be adopted? All in favor say aye. Opposed no. Carried. They are adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Mr. President, I move that LB 592 as amended be advanced to E & R Final.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Shall LB 592 be advanced? Senator Chambers, discussion.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I had opposed this bill strenuously on General File and I oppose it again today, and I am going to try to state very briefly why. The problem of drugs is not new. The problem of drugs and gangs in Omaha is not new. White politicians have just decided to grab it as an issue while they are campaigning, but in the early days when we, in the black community, were trying to get the chief of police and the mayor to agree to establish a unit in the Police Division made up of nine black officers who would be a unit that would deal with youth violence and drugs, the chief, the mayor, white politicians, and the Omaha World-Herald saw no need for it. When it became a highly political issue, they suddenly come in with various bills and recommendations that are not getting to the heart of the problem. We wanted a black unit because we could see the roots of the problem beginning to develop in our community. Black officers know the difference between a gathering of young people and a gang. White officers make no distinction, in many cases, between innocent conduct and criminal conduct.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Excuse me, Senator Chambers. (Gavel.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Any gathering of young black people can be viewed as a threatening situation by a white officer, and the day will be reached when they will give the order, they won't put it in writing, if you see three or more black youngsters together, break them up or take them to jail. And it will be very reminiscent of the slave codes in the early days of this country where white police officers become occupying forces with