

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Lindsay, do you agree with the answers that Senator Abboud gave to the questions that I asked him about what is available to a judge in terms of sentencing right now?

SENATOR LINDSAY: Yes, I do.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: What new is added then by this bill, other than to give the appearance that the Legislature is giving something that is...doing something that is necessary?

SENATOR LINDSAY: It has a mandatory minimum.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: What is that adding, though, in terms of what the judge can do right now?

SENATOR LINDSAY: It reduces a bit of discretion as far as what the judge can do with the sentence in that the judge is required to impose the mandatory minimum.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Now, the amounts, as Senator Abboud pointed out, the amounts of drugs are substantial. Are you saying that a seller of death should get only two years, or only three years as a minimum?

SENATOR LINDSAY: No, I don't think that that should be a minimum. But I think, if we're going to...we've got to put a floor somewhere. Hopefully, the judges would come down on the large dealers that you've been referring to, would come down extremely hard on them.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, we are dealing in futility. Whether you pass the bill or not makes no difference at all. It's not going to touch anything, it's not going to do anything, but it will make you feel good. And it will show once again how inept the Legislature is in dealing with a problem. And, if there were proper reporting of what we're doing, it would be made clear that under the existing law a sentence, stiffer than what is being proposed in these two pieces...in this piece of legislation, can be imposed right now. It should also give pause to all of us when we see how harshly the judge dealt, under the present law, with a pregnant woman.