

April 3, 1989

LB 592

CLERK: Not at this time, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, back to the bill under consideration, LB 592. Can you bring us up to date?

CLERK: Mr. President, 592 was discussed this morning. There is pending a motion to bracket the bill until April 17. That motion has been offered by Senator Schmit. The body was in discussion of that motion.

SPEAKER BARRETT: On the motion then to bracket the bill until April 17, for discussion purposes, Senator Wesely, followed by Senator Abboud.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and members, I haven't followed all the debate on this issue but I would rise to make a couple of points. First off, as we're talking on this bill, it seems to me that we're discussing the following scenario as a solution to our problems with drugs. First off, that we need to have more police or patrolmen to catch people illegally using drugs and, secondly, once caught, we need to have higher penalties. That's what the particular bill calls for so that we can properly punish these individual for illegally using drugs. And then, third, we need to have larger prisons to hold these people that we have caught and convicted and now need to punish for illegally using drugs. And it seems to me all of this discussion and all this focus is on what happens after they have decided to use drugs illegally. It seems to me that a lot of the focus has got to turn back to why are they making this choice. Why are they deciding it's in their own best interests or throwing away whatever future they have to be involved in drug use? And I think we need to go back to the root cause of the problem and try and address how we stop it from ever getting to the point that we need the police and patrolmen and the higher penalties and the prisons. And that is the philosophy, I think, we need to spend some time on. That's why there is some merit, I believe, in Senator Schmit's effort to bracket the bill. There is no particular bill before us perhaps on the floor but Senator Schimek does have a bill before the Education Committee, Senator Schimek and Senator Baack, and that bill is LB 514. A study that we did last year in the Health and Human Services Committee looked at the issue of drugs and the problem that we were having with teen pregnancy, teen suicide and teen drug use in particular. And what we found from that study was that at this very vulnerable age of our teenagers in our state