

May 16, 1989

LB 814

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Mr. President, I move the adoption of the E & R amendments to LB 814.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Shall the E & R amendments be adopted to LB 814? All in favor say aye. Opposed no. Carried. They are adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, the first amendment to the bill is by Senators Chambers, Kristensen and Chizek. (The Chambers-Chizek-Kristensen amendment appears on page 2242 in the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Chambers, will you handle it?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Yes, I shall. Mr. Chairman, Mr. President and members of the Legislature, this is an amendment which is designed to remove funds for construction from the budget replacing all of that with the authorization of a study to be done on all of those factors that would bear on the current prison population, if there is overcrowding, why that overcrowding occurs, projections and, in short, a study of the entire matter that should be addressed when we talk about building additional prisons. I am handing around a set of articles that will show you some things that bear on the overcrowding. You will see cases where Omaha judges sentence people to prison under circumstances that I, and even some prosecutors, don't feel would justify imprisonment. One instance involved a woman, and these are all Black people, by the way. She has a college degree, a job and a daughter. She was caught in one of these sting operations where the police sell drugs, and the judge said that she needs to go to prison; described her as an atypical drug user. Not a pusher, not a seller, but a user or an addict. So this addict was caught in the police net and sentenced to prison. One young man who was caught with some drugs in one of these sting operations was sentenced to three years in prison by the judge. He had never had a conviction for anything before, but the judge said he needed to go to prison. In one of the sting operations, as they call it in Omaha, they go into the Black neighborhood and sell dope. We don't need sting operations with cops selling dope to catch addicts. If there's to be a sting operation, let them sting the pusher, the dealer and the supplier. By these tactics they are swelling their arrest statistics, but they're not