

May 19, 1989

LB 340

planning on asking Senator Baack some questions about this. Presently, LB 340 prohibits Nebraska museums from exhibiting any skeletal remains that can be identified. This could prohibit exhibition in Nebraska of such significant collections as the mummy of King Tut and associated funerary artifacts. It could prohibit the exhibit of collections now held by Nebraska museums that were acquired ethically with legal title and about which no controversy exists regarding repatriation. It is estimated that one-third to one-half of the collections of the Center for Asian Culture at Morrill Hall could be affected if LB 340 is allowed to pass. And so I would like to ask Senator Baack some questions concerning this. Senator Baack, would LB 340 require current holdings of cultural antiquities that originated in the Middle East, Greece, Italy, Europe or other countries outside the United States to be returned and not exhibited in Nebraska? Would it have an effect on traveling museums, for example, the King Tut mummy and related artifacts? And, specifically, what skeletal remains and good does the language in LB 340 target?

PRESIDENT: Senator Baack, please.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes, Mr. President and colleagues, I will be glad to answer those questions. I think that the amendment that was filed would have gone way beyond the purposes, I think, for the reason of filing it and these questions can be answered, I think, very simply. The intent of this bill is not to preclude the museums from holding these cultural antiquities from any of these other countries or from countries outside the U.S. It is not intended to do that. It is also not intended to preclude them from having something such as the King Tut mummy and related artifacts come to this state, because I think if you look very carefully at the bill, it says that it is simply not intended to affect skeletal remains and burial goods that are...that are as remote in time and place from the present...from present day Nebraska as these...as these items are. And it also...in the bill I think it's very, very clear in Sections...in Section 2, subsection 4 and 5 that it is clearly intended to protect the unmarked graves of "pioneer settlers and Indians, the Egyptian mummies, Chinese burial goods", things like that simply are not...were not in the minds of the drafters of the bill and we do not intend LB 340 to affect such items. Secondly, if you...if you read LB 340 and you interpret the language which is in the bill, such as known relatives or family or tribe to mean all discoverable descendants, no matter how remote in time, this does not comport with the intent of 340.