

January 8, 1990

SPEAKER BARRETT: The time has come, Senator Chambers, (laughter) there are no other lights.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I listened to Senator Warner and I listened to Senator Lamb, and their comments tell exactly why we ought to have this in our rules. Right now, if a discussion were to be taken as to what we ought to do on a matter such as this, say we're at the end of the session, we would be thinking about party, the personality of the Governor and the specific issues before us. By institutionalizing this procedure in our rules, those considerations will not be what determines what we're going to do. It will be clear that whoever is the Governor, it could be somebody as wise, as humane, Senator Barrett, as considerate, as filled with proper judgment as myself, or it could be Governor Kerrey, who vetoed some of my bills after a session had ended. And I wrote a poem about him that other people found amusing, but he didn't. I haven't written a poem about this Governor who sits in office, who vetoed a bill of mine, well, on two occasions after the session was over. So I'm not making it an issue that depends on which party has a representative sitting in the Governor's seat. Party affiliation does not insure anything, except in some cases election or defeat. But as far as the capability and competency of the individual elected, party affiliation has very little to do with that. I would like us to institutionalize this position in our rules so that it's clear when the session comes to the 59th day and the 89th day, short and long terms respectively, it is known to everybody that we are going to have an opportunity to override. Frankly, I can't understand the fear that Senator Lamb and Senator Warner have. If you adopt their position, we don't need a rule on anything, because 25 votes can allow us to do anything, so why have a rule at all? Whenever we talk about something that might impinge on a Governor who happens to be sitting, the members of that party become hypersensitive and hyperactive in terms of trying to defend and protect and shield that individual. Yet in other settings, we hear these same people talk about the institution of the Legislature, how we have to rise above politics, we have to do that which shows statespersonship. I think this shows statespersonship, because we are fine-tuning the legislative system of which we are a part. We have an obligation to strongly and aggressively defend those prerogatives that belong to us as representatives of the people. Whether the people were wise or foolish in sending different ones of us down here, they have to live with the