

January 31, 1990

LB 769  
LR 8

it becomes clear to the public, if it ever does, prior to their having a case that they want to appeal to the Supreme Court, when it becomes clear to them what the Legislature has done to them, then I think the public will indicate that they were sold out, that they were betrayed by the Legislature which knew something that they did not. We cannot say that the sparse and meager articles that are written in the newspaper, about this serious issue, can take the place of public information. The public has not been informed about this bill. They have not been told how it's going to impact on their rights as citizens. Although the bill was far more inflammatory in terms of emotions being stirred up, it had far less overall impact in terms of the constitutional guarantees to citizens, that's LB 769, the parental notification bill. There were reams and reams of newspaper articles, and the articles were written about that subject as they are written about drugs and gangs, because a lazy reporter has an easy job doing that. You catch the public's eye, you know that their attention is already riveted on that subject, so rather, even in those areas, rather than inform, there is merely a narration of certain selected items that will keep the public reading about those subjects. In reality the media often do a disservice to the public by their inability to establish priorities and inform the public as a free press was envisioned as doing when they were guaranteed rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The press spoken of under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was not primarily a business enterprise whose number one goal was to make money. It did not envision reporters as people scrambling to try to hold a job, and as a result, slanting the stories that they write to avoid touching on certain subjects.

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: It did not envision editors who would see fit to publish the names of certain persons who had not been accused, actually, of offenses, but were suspected or being investigated for having committed such acts while readily...they'll publish the names of certain people, but others, if they're important enough, the names will not be published. So when we see how poor a job the media will do on some of the very important issues facing the citizenry, a bill such as this cannot be left to the media for purposes of informing the public. There has not been an attempt, statewide, to present to the people the fact that they are losing rights