

had tried it the other day on an aspect of this bill where you might say the conduct involved is more serious than what this would be that we're talking about, and to try to bring us back somewhat to the subject that we were considering, the bill is designed to achieve a level of punishment one notch above that which is ordinarily prescribed if the act involves somebody 18 or older dealing with somebody younger than 18. A Class IC...Class IB felony carries a punishment of up to life. There is no other crime besides homicide in this state that carries a life sentence, and I don't believe that we should get so carried away with the hysteria and the other things associated with fighting this so-called drug war that we begin to impose sentences that have no rational basis, no logical basis, and that will throw out of kilter the rest of the law as far as sentencing people for crimes. It's one thing to state as a principle that young people need to be protected from drugs, they need to be protected from those who would try to get them to use drugs, try to persuade them to sell drugs, or try to persuade them to transport drugs. But in our abhorrence for that kind of conduct, we should not skew the entire system of sentencing that exists in the statutes now. When we begin to change punishments on a piecemeal basis, we wind up with a set of circumstances where, at some point, the public is going to become aware of what we've done and say, well, you have such a serious punishment for that but this other act, which is far worse, doesn't carry that stiff a sentence. Senator Johnson, I'm going to ask you a question because it's your amendment, but not for the purpose of trying to trick you in any way. Do you think that it's worse to give drugs to a young person than it is to cut a young person's arm off with a meat cleaver, such as the kind that our Speaker had the other day.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: I have it in my drawer.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Oh, I'm glad I'm over here and you're over there. How are you at throwing those things? Well, I have Senator Conway between us and a cleaver won't hurt wood too much, which is what his desk is made of. But, Senator Johnson, here's my question. Which do you think is worse? We've got a child here. Well, anybody 17 years, 364 days old is covered by this bill. So, in effect, one day can be the difference between the one doing this and the one being persuaded to do it, and the one doing it can get life. You've got two youngsters. One, they could be brothers. They could be twins. One was born at 11:59 today and the other is born at 12:03 tomorrow, so in