

January 14, 1991

from Lincoln, Beutler.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay, thank you. Members of the Legislature, I was trying to get before us, as clearly as possible, what we're actually dealing with. With the short amount of time remaining I don't have enough time to go into anything, so I will sit down at this point and turn my light on again.

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Wesely, followed by Senator Crosby.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the body, I would rise in opposition to this proposed rule change and vigorously, as best I can, oppose any proposal to close off debate through a cloture rule change. It's a position I've held for most of the twelve years I've been down here, thirteen now, counting this session. It's a position, I think, is a fundamental one to this body. With rare exception, we have not adopted any cloture limitation on debate within this Legislature. Perhaps some have a better historic memory, but I can only recall very briefly that we ever had any sort of cloture rule in place. It's one reason I'm very proud of the Nebraska Legislature. We have not taken the step to shut off the voice of the people in those rare instances where filibusters are seen to be, or in some estimation are needed to raise points and to make issue on some very important matters. I can only think of a couple of cases, in my twelve years, where we have had a filibuster of any tremendous impact in this body. Obviously, the debate of the last two years, dealing with abortion, was one of those instances. It was a very unfortunate circumstance to be within, but, nevertheless, a very important debate. If I could, Mr. President, seems to be a little loud on the floor here. I don't...

SENATOR WARNER: (Gavel.) There will be order in the Chamber so that we can hear Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I understand, you know, obviously sometimes debate is important and sometimes it isn't. But I think on this particular matter there is a very significant role that the issue of debate and cloture has to the body; it's fundamental to the Legislature; it's fundamental to our democracy. This Legislature is a marketplace for ideas. I've heard Senator Chambers say that, and I truly believe it. When you look at this issue, in terms of limiting debate, in essence, it ties into another concept we had for a short time, limiting