

February 11, 1991 LB 68

at the university with the idea that the players need some additional assistance, that this bill with the provision requiring at least four other schools to be in states which had adopted similar legislation, it would not put the university in violation of any NCAA rule by the passage of the bill, that it is in accord with what the university is doing and the university has no objection to the bill. If you want to take the time to read the article, you see that I have not misrepresented anything in it. Attached also is an editorial from Sports Illustrated which supported the bill itself, pointed out the wisdom of it and the need for this type of legislation. Senator Elmer told me this morning about an editorial he read recently in the Christian Science Monitor that talked about the oppressiveness of the NCAA and how little was achieved at its recent convention. Nothing is ever done at these conventions that helps the players, nothing. I'll tell you the two examples that this editorial seized on. They cut the number of meals that an athlete can have and they're reducing the number of scholarships by 10, 10 percent. That certainly doesn't help the athlete. Now, when I first offered the bill without that provision regarding the other states, there were senators who said they agreed that something needed to be done but for fear of putting the university in an awkward position they couldn't support the bill. Senator Ron Withem was the one who led the charge as far as crafting that amendment about the additional schools. With that having been done, the senators were able to cast that conscience vote. When that bill passed many senators in other states had not become aware of the fact that the Governor had vetoed it and they wrote to me for copies of the legislation and the floor debate because they felt that similar legislation indeed was needed, so Nebraska will not be out there all alone. It should be kept in mind that money is received by everybody who performs a service. At this university, there are over 100 job classifications that are made known to all of the students which would entitle them to work and they are paid for this work. On the other hand, an athlete cannot work, so if he comes from a poor family, he cannot work, his family cannot give him anything, the university cannot give him anything, the only way he can live is by receiving money in violation of the NCAA rules and all of these athletes manage to live and I think they should. But they shouldn't have to violate rules in order to do it. Another handout I've put on your desk to indicate why some things said by universities should not be taken at face value, I had told you about a bill that I had offered in the Legislature passed and it was signed into law that prohibited the taking of