

March 26, 1991

LB 181, 528

Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance 528.

SPEAKER BAACK: LB 528 advances. We will now go to LB 181.

CLERK: Mr. President, 181 was a bill introduced by Senators Chizek, Lindsay, Kristensen, Will, Rasmussen, Horgan, Lynch and Abboud. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 11, referred to the Judiciary Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments pending at this time, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Lindsay, on LB 181.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the body, LB 181 is a bill that we've heard, this will be the third year at least since I've been here that we've heard it. The bill would add two judgeships to the Nebraska District Court bench. In the past, I've come before you and we've argued that these judgeships are necessary to reduce the workload in Douglas County. To an extent, that's still the case but I think a recent...a recent occurrence will give you an idea of what we've been talking about for a couple of years and it's not a sky-is-falling sort of a proposal. Let me reiterate from last year or remind you from last year what's happened. The bill has advanced from the Legislature twice and it's been vetoed twice. One of the times it was vetoed was because the Governor said that redistricting was necessary before we should consider adding additional judges. For your benefit, there is a redistricting bill before the body. It's meeting strong opposition from most of the rural senators. So redistricting is an option if it's not the option that...if 181 is not the option that the senators wish to pursue. In Douglas County, we have not...until recently have not had a judge added to Douglas County since 1974 and the workload there has dramatically increased. Since 1972, the caseload has increased 90 percent. The civil caseload has increased by 119 percent; the felony caseload by 75 percent; domestic relations by 62 percent. In Douglas County, right now the Douglas County District Court handles 35 percent of the total district caseload in Nebraska. I don't think there is any question that Douglas County does need additional judges. As a matter of fact, the judicial nominating...excuse me, the Judicial Resources Commission recently agreed with that statement when it moved a judge from