

following. First, the committee amendments provide for a severability clause to ensure that if any part of the legislation is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions will remain intact and in force. Second, the committee amendment harmonizes the effective date of the Nebraska Fair Housing Act with federal guidelines. LB 825, as was originally drafted, called for an effective date of February 1, 1993. As I said, the federal legislation requires an effective date, October 1, 1991, and the committee amendment addresses that problem. Third, the committee amendment clarifies that if a conciliation agreement between an aggrieved party and a respondent is reached before a hearing officer decides housing discrimination has occurred, the incident will not count as an offense on the respondent's record. Fourth, the committee amendment guarantees that the parties involved in a housing discrimination complaint can, at any time, have access to the information from the Equal Opportunity Commission's investigation of the complaint. Fifth, the committee amendment clarifies that if an aggrieved person files a lawsuit in either state or federal court while the commission is already investigating the complaint, the commission must suspend its activities to ensure the respondent will not be tried twice for the same offense. Sixth, the committee amendment requires that anyone selected to be an administrative hearing officer must meet the qualifications for becoming a district judge. Seventh, the committee amendment strikes the language allowing possibility of awarding punitive damages in a housing discrimination case because punitive damages are unconstitutional in Nebraska. Eighth, the committee amendment makes the Department of Economic Development, rather than the Governor's Police Research Office, responsible for preparing state housing strategy. Colleagues, the committee amendments are the result of intense negotiations between local, federal and state agencies. They were agreed to after close examination by the committee and much discussion. The result was that the committee voted unanimously to advance LB 825 to General File. And I would ask for your favorable vote for the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Chizek. Is there anyone who wishes to debate the committee amendments? Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President and members, I rise in support of the committee amendments. As Senator Chizek said, we did spend a great deal of time negotiating out these