

even though there is a death penalty in this state, the Pardon Board, on at least one occasion, has commuted a death sentence.

SENATOR CROSBY: Uh-huh.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So we cannot touch that. But I think with the legislative intent being clearly expressed, the Pardon Board would be very careful and go slowly before it would commute one of these sentences.

SENATOR CROSBY: Usually it would be a break on something like that. Okay, thank you. Thank you very much. I will support the bill.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Crosby. I will now recognize Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Madam President and members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose this motion and I rise to oppose the motion because I'm against LB 327. I think we should keep the death penalty. I'm against an attempt by this body to repeal Nebraska's death penalty. In the past, Senator Chambers has introduced bills to repeal the death penalty. I've been down here 15 years now and I believe that we've debated the issue nearly every year or at least every other year. But I remember when he had the bill to repeal the death penalty and replace it with a mandatory 30-year sentence. LB 327 does not go that far. It replaces the death penalty with a maximum life sentence. If the bill passes, however, I am fearful that there will be attempts next year or the year after to come back to the Legislature and reduce the life sentence to a minimum, say, of 30 years with no parole, or some other further weakening of the penalty for murder. I feel that in order for a punishment to be effective it must fit the crime. Anything less than the death penalty as a punishment for a cold-blooded premeditated murder is ineffective and we've seen that time and time again. The death penalty is the fairest method of punishment. If a life is taken unmercifully, death is a fair consequence. A murderer must be held accountable and bear the responsibility for his or her actions. Then considering...when considering the plight of the victims the penalty is the most just way of dealing with the murderer. We must remember the pain and torture the victims experienced. It is unfair to them not to take that into consideration. And that is why I support keeping the death penalty. Murder is a most violent crime. It's irreversible and