

Senator Chris Beutler. They are nine special education students from Prescott Elementary School in Lincoln and their teachers. Would you rise and be recognized and welcomed to the Chambers. Thank you. I'll now recognize the senators in the following order--Senator Hefner, Senator Pirsch, Senator Warner, Senator Schimek, Senator Robak, Senator Nelson, and Senator Horgan. Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Madam President and members, I didn't...I wasn't able to finish last time, so I wanted to talk just a little bit more of why I oppose bringing this out of committee. Like Senator Chizek said, it was a four to four deadlock, and we find that every once in a while. But I oppose this motion. Just want to tell you what's happening over in Iowa, our neighboring state. There the latest polls show that Iowans do favor the death penalty. Now at the present time they do not have the death penalty, they have life imprisonment without parole. I understand that there's been legislation introduced and Governor Branstad is supporting it. So there's a state that used to have the death penalty, repealed it, and now the majority of the people would like to see it imposed again. It was mentioned on the floor that execution is inhumane, that's true. And I did introduce a bill, probably eight or ten years ago, to use another form of the death penalty, but I was unsuccessful in getting this out of committee. But when we talk about the electric chair being inhumane, I want to ask this body, isn't premeditated murder inhumane? Let us go back to 1983 when the two Sarpy County boys were killed. As I understand it, they pleaded for their lives, they pleaded to the murder to let them live, but he gagged them and then he stabbed them repeatedly. So I would say that this is certainly inhumane. But I just feel that, if we have the death penalty, it prevents further loss of innocent lives. And I realize the death penalty is not pleasant to carry out. But when we weigh the loss of innocent victims and the potential loss of more lives, death for murder is clearly the lesser evil. I feel that life is too sacred, too precious to risk losing more innocent lives. Which is worse, the death of a murderer, or the risk of losing another innocent life or lives? Society deserves adequate protection from a potential murderer. The only protection left when dealing with a ruthless killer is death. And I know Senator Chambers says, well, they'll be in prison without parole. But we cannot do that. The Governor, or the Attorney General, or some other...the Parole Board may let this prisoner out. We cannot guarantee that he or she will be in