

February 15, 1995 LB 65

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly has been interesting to observe the dynamics of the body on this particular issue. I don't see this issue as a partisan issue or a competition issue or an election experiment issue, and I certainly believe, in either circumstance, everyone's vote counts, period. I believe that whoever receives the highest number of votes in a presidential election in this state should be the beneficiary of our five meager electoral votes, and as a result, I intend to continue to support LB 65, and would urge my fellow members to do likewise. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members of the body, just to add a little bit of historical rationale, if you wish, to the whole electoral college system and the process that we find ourselves today even in the debate of the system, you know, if you go back to the Constitutional Convention, you start reading that there was a gentleman by the name of Elbridge Gerry, fascinating gentleman, very much of a common person, who wasn't necessarily the rich landowner, aristocracy type, and he kind of summed it up clearly when the Constitutional Convention was talking about, you know, how the president should be elected, and that certainly was somewhat of a large discussion, but really the major part of the discussion wasn't so much how it should...the president should be elected, but how many presidents should we have, what powers should the president have, and should the State Legis...should the National Legislature have any authority over the executive branch and, particularly, the power of the president. And for awhile, it was always assumed that there would be two presidents, you know, and they had a major debate on how many presidents we should have, how many leaders we should have. And for awhile there was even a discussion on, you know, one should be more of a policy person, the other one should be more on international affairs, but, no, the president should be...Alexander Hamilton had the concept that the president should be almost like a king because you need someone at the top that has absolute authority that can lead. Obviously, there was a lot of discussion and compromises were made. In fact, the whole constitution is filled with compromise on policy. Elbridge Gerry had an interesting quote, as if you remember the constitution was in secret, all of the discussions were in secret, but Madison decided he was going to