

Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, I rise in support of LR 27CA. We heard the constitutional amendment in the Executive Board. Senator Chambers was the only individual who spoke to the issue. We discussed it. It was advanced out of committee without opposition. The proposal is one that merely says that the Legislature would have the ability to provide those similar types of benefits that other elected officials have the opportunity to provide. Currently, we have to go to the public, as Senator Chambers said, with regard to compensation issues. It is another method by which the Legislature has the ability to recognize needs that individual members have. Frankly, if it wasn't for the fact that I had another occupation in addition to the one I have here, I would have to find some form of health care coverage for my kids. This would be an option for someone who was, I guess, less fortunate than I to have another employer besides the State of Nebraska for purposes of the health care coverage that they would very likely need. Oftentimes we hear at Congress... I know that there was a bill that was passed recently that said Congress is now going to live under the laws that it passes for other people. As a member of the Legislature, I would love to have that ability. I would love to be in the situation as we sent over the other day, a small group, a health care bill that raised from 25 to 50 the number of employees that could fall under that provision. This is the one singular issue that I see as a need that many individual members would have the ability to partake in. The life insurance is another. The retirement benefits are something that are out there that could be looked at but each and every one of these would be addressed by the Legislature and would have to be adopted only if the voters of the state gave their approval to this constitutional amendment. I would hope that you would advance this proposal to E & R Initial. I think it's something that deserves debate, not only here, but by the public, by the editorial writers, by the media, whatever form that may be, but it clearly deserves an opportunity to be addressed in this day and age with regard to the issues that we all face and that our constituents face as well. With that, I would urge advancement to E & R Initial of LR 27CA. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Hall. Let me introduce another guest of the Legislature, guest of Senator Kristensen. Under the north balcony, we have Louise Mary Grant from Wheaton,