

page 233 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President and members of the Legislature, this is the amendment that I had discussed earlier this morning which would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. Some of my colleagues had asked me quite justifiably why, after I had said so much about the lack of courage on the part of my colleagues because of their unwillingness to even discuss this issue, would I pull the amendment without seeking a vote. I pulled it because I do want a vote and I want everybody who is present to be here when the vote is taken and I'm going to ask for a roll call vote, and I know who is here so we're going to vote yes or no or sit it out and do nothing, but there will be a vote or it. I had also said, though this is secondary with reference to this particular motion, I want the vote primarily, but every time I have an opportunity to discuss this issue I intend to do so and, since nobody else will talk about it, I only get the number of times that I'm allowed under the rules to provide any discussion for the record on this issue. What I wish we could do is select a starting point from which we would discuss this issue. The starting point, in my opinion, should be that every one of these individuals is first and foremost a human being; that every one of these individuals has as much essential human value and moral worth as any one of us on this floor, as the member of any of our families, of any of our friends, as much moral worth in the sight of the creator, if you believe in such a thing, as the Pope, the saints, Billy Graham, Minister Farrakhan, Martin Luther King, Martin Luther, Shakespeare or anybody else. If we are willing to include these individuals in the human family, then we can stop seeing them as monsters, as demons from the pit incarnated in human form but lacking all human moral value. You don't even know if a person is gay by looking. None bears the mark of Cain in his or her forehead. And our policies which purport to be based on equality of opportunity, a desire to see all employable people employed, if those policies are to mean anything, we should apply those things to the people most in need of them. The Jesus that I was taught so much about as a child was often approached and ridiculed by the doctors of the law, the individuals described collectively as the Scribes and the Pharisees, and these groups would always try to, what was called, catch him in his words; try to ask him a question which he could not answer without contradicting something he had said prior. Now this is the person, this Jesus, who said it is the