

January 17, 1996

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I'll withdraw that one.

CLERK: Senator Beutler, I now have your motion, Senator, with respect to suspension so as to permit a vote on proposed rule number 6.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President (sic) and members of the Legislature, this is it, whatever you decide, so be it. But at least we've gotten to the point where you can make a decision on something, on something that matters. It's the motion to suspend the rules. If there are 30 votes to do this, then we will proceed to a vote or the rule change immediately and the matter will be done. And I would just ask this of all of you in good faith, this debate itself can take a bit of time, it will get towards the lunch hour. The normal tactical practice would be, and I would expect it of myself or anybody else, to try to drive the debate into the lunch hour or into adjournment. I hope you will stay and be finished with the matter one way or the other. You know I...I was looking today at Governor Nelson's legislative initiatives, Governor Nelson's initiative and budget adjustments, two big thick documents. And it got me thinking about the whole institution of government as it's come to be in the state of Nebraska and asking myself, why has it come to be this way? And what's happened between 1978 when I came into the Legislature and today is that slowly but surely but very definitively over time, over that period of time, the lawmaking branch of government has become the Governor's office. Now the way our government's supposed to work, the legislative branch is the lawmaking branch, and the Governor administers the law, and the judicial branch interprets the law. But over time and historically, in a very short time, the Governor has become predominate and his initiatives have multiplied. And I'm not talking about one particular governor, I'm talking about a sequence of events, and there is an institutional reason for that. The institutional reason is that we are so weakly ordered in here that we have no ability to focus and have an agenda of our own. And we're the lawmaking branch, and we're unable to do it because one senator versus one governor doesn't measure up. Never has, never will, not with a veto power. But those of us working in here together with the good ideas that come from this body, and my God, Jerry Warner, for one, has had good ideas that should have been law year after year. A lot of them are law,