

February 22, 1996 LB 645

drowning of women as witches in Salem. There were these highly religious people who were so self-righteous, so holier-than-thou, so able to divine the mind of God while unable to determine whether something is done with a sexual purpose that they will have people branded with one of the worst kinds of brands that can be put on a person in this society when they have not committed the offense that the brand is supposed to signify. It's easy to get up here and babble and run off at the mouth about these sex offenders and my children's safety and all of those other things. But we are legislating. We are not on the campaign trail. This is not a forum for Buchanan's bigots. And I know some of Buchanan's bigots, he calls them Buchanan's brigade, Buchanan's bigots, some of them are in this Legislature. They are unreasonable, they are unjust, and they will pervert the law to carry out a misbegotten agenda. If somebody has sexually assaulted a child, that is one of the worst things that can be done. And such a person should be apprehended, prosecuted, and punished, as they used to say on Mr. District Attorney, to the limit of the law. But if you take somebody who has not committed such an offense and prosecute them as though they had committed it and punish them as though they had committed it and brand them as though they had committed it, then you are absolutely unequivocally wrong. To draft language and put it into the law that allows such a thing is inexcusable, it is not justified, it is worst than irresponsible. It shows a hatred, a contempt, and a disregard for intrinsic human worth. Senator Witek is willing to throw away people, innocent, to get some that she, from her narrow point of view, feel are guilty and ought to be branded in such and such a way. I can imagine what she'd like to see done to me if it weren't for the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution; that prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. She's not the only one who'd like to see the Thirteenth Amendment repealed. And I will not tell you what that one relates to. But as long as I'm on the floor of this Legislature, I'm going to do everything within my power under the rules to stop the kind of thing that is being done by Senator Abboud's bill. There are other members on this floor who would not...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...hesitate to vote for my amendment if it were not for this vague threat from the federal government. They are not telling you that you have to pass a certain law.