

February 23, 1996 LB 1248

SENATOR CROSBY: Time.

SENATOR VRTISKA: ...has been very prudent and they are doing their very best to deal with this issue, but this is something that would not only help them but could help some other counties in the future. With that, thank you very much, Madam President.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Before we begin the debate on the amendment I'd like to welcome to the Legislature, Senator Hillman has a guest, Olga Olivarex from Gering. She's under the south balcony. And would you please stand so we can welcome you. Thank you for being here today. For debate on...discussion on Senator Vrtiska's amendment to the committee amendment, Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President and members of the Legislature, I'm opposed to this and I'm going to fight it tooth and nail, relentlessly because it's based on the fact that these counties want the death penalty but they don't want to pay the cost. I have argued for years about the expense of imposing the death penalty in trying to carry it out. Richardson County is not required by the state to seek the death penalty in any case. That's a determination made by the county official in Richardson County, and any other county who files charges. In some counties in Nebraska there are county attorneys opposed to the death penalty and they will not seek it. So they're not going to come under what is happening in Richardson County. What Senator Vrtiska is caught up in is a situation where he consistently has supported, I believe, the death penalty, but now that the bill comes due, he and his county don't want to pay. And I think that should be a requirement. If you want to join the dance, pay the piper. But the issue is much broader than the death penalty and its cost. Counties, cities, and villages are going to be encouraged to try to anticipate what may be an expensive pay out for them. Say that Omaha continues these crazy, high-speed chases and will have some debts to pay as a result. They don't have to appropriate any money in any contingent fund or anything else for that, they can first try to come to the state and get the money. And suppose they don't get it. Then it has delayed some of the activities that the city, county, or village ought to undertake in a timely manner. Politicians are sensitive to having to spend money. So if a fund is created that offers them a way out, like any rat