

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 22, 1999 LB 137

Government entities' open records law was put on the books in 1978, and the personnel records were exempt. The Attorney General Opinion then required applications and letters of support for government jobs to be public records. An interview should also be a public meeting if a quorum of the group is in attendance. Public bodies had a concern with people just applying or inquiring about a job and their current position being jeopardized for just inquiring. An example would be a superintendency of a school, and, actually, this was originally brought to me by the superintendents, who had a concern that if you were in North Platte, Nebraska, and you wanted to interview for a job in Hastings, you would not bring favor upon yourself if it was a public knowledge that you were looking to leave North Platte and, in fact, you never even ended up making the finalists list. And so, the compromise or why we brought this bill is to ensure that that type of information is only necessary if you become a finalist. It leaves intact, actually, the interview, should it be a public meeting, but it does say that all admin...that LB 789 would have originally have shut off the records from being open or public records during the entire application. But this compromise this year and the last year, it allows finalists' records to be public record; leaves in the requirement that if a person is interviewed by a quorum of the group that is doing the hiring, the meeting must be open to the press. As you can see, the Press Association supports this. This was a compromise that was worked out. I think it helps to ensure a good pool of applicants in a number of government bodies. With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Bohlke. Chair recognizes Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Bohlke, just a short question, if I may.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Bohlke.

SENATOR BEUTLER: The bill seems to key on the word "interview" and I just wanted to have a statement for the record with regard to "interview". That can be a personal interview, face to face; it can be a telephone interview; it can be a written interview?