

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

February 8, 1999 LB 211

the complicating, but I want to simplify it and bring it back to what it is that we're doing. This is not a bill designed to protect public employees. That's not the purpose of the bill. We are marking off territory or geography and any person who is within the confines of that territory will not be allowed to smoke, and any other person who is a nonsmoker all the time can come within that territory and expect not to be assaulted by smoke. That's what we're looking at, territory, not classes of people. I would not support a bill if its only goal was to protect state employees when we're talking about a health matter. This amendment that Senator Tyson offered is a rational amendment and a position the state ought to take. This Legislature, by law, has intruded into the private sector and required certain nonsmoking areas. Well, be the example and demonstrate, since you know this situation well, the validity of the position that is being imposed elsewhere. In other words, physician, heal thyself. And for those who are deeply religious, or pretend to be, you know that when Jesus was lynched and was hanging up on the cross, you know how they mocked him? He saved others; himself he cannot save. Other areas have been marked by the Legislature as nonsmoking areas. Why now do we halt when we talk about the buildings under our direct control? That's not difficult to understand. Whenever confusion can be brought into this subject, the tobacco industry is delirious with delight. They thrive on confusion, division, and misdirection. The only question is whether the state ought to prohibit smoking in...or use of tobacco products in buildings of the state. That's the only issue. As for all these old gentlemen and gentle ladies who may be in the veterans home, why should you accommodate some by letting them smoke when it's going to infringe on the rights of the others who don't smoke? Why is the smoker taken as the standard? The nonsmoker should be taken as a standard because you always hear people saying, your rights end where my nose begins, except when it comes to smoking. All of a sudden, something which has devastated this society, which kills over 430,000 people a year, is going to be enshrined, placed on a pedestal and treated as a god of this society, as a positive good, as something protected by the constitution,...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.