

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

May 11, 1999

LB 105

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Chambers, on the Smith amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, young Senator Smith is going to owe me after this because I'm going to follow his direction and vote "no". Actually, he and I have been discussing this issue and it will come back again. My views might be somewhat different from those of most of my colleagues, or maybe from the views of all of my colleagues, but as a black person I'm aware of problems in trying to find decent affordable housing that many, if not all, of my white colleagues may be unaware of. You all may know what block busting is and you may not, but that's where realtors decide that they're going to open an area to black people and, in order to do that, they will first do all they can to make sure no black people move in. If a white person is going to sell a home, they either make sure that black people are not aware of it by cutting some deals before it's put on the market, or when a black family comes to view the house they're told, well, it's no longer available, somebody's interested in it. Then that family will see that the house is still on the market. What happens in some cities is that a human relations department or its equivalent will send a white couple to that house and they will be shown the house and made to know that, yeah, it is for sale. So you go through all of these hoops. Many people who are black will say, well, if that's the attitude in this neighborhood, maybe if I did move in my children would be at risk, they'd burn crosses on my lawn, they'd break out the windows, they'd put graffiti on my house. What I'm telling you are some things that happened to Bob Gibson and Bob Boozer, names that you might be familiar with, in Omaha, so these things have happened, they still do happen, but there's a little more...a little less "blatantness" about some of it. What they will do is move in a black family, then put the word out that the "Browns" are coming. That's to keep from saying black people are moving into the neighborhood. Well, "Browns" refer to the completion of the people moving in. White people panic and those who can move out will flee. And when you're in a desperate set of circumstances to move, you sell cheaper than you would ordinarily because you got to get out. So your house is snapped up, not by black people who want to move into the area, but by people who are going to sell those houses at a profit, because they buy cheap and sell dear when black people finally come in. And we may pay more for that house than white