

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

January 24, 2000 LB 509

recognize that Senators Chambers and Brashear are going to take the high ground fighting against the death penalty in this state, and that they are going to say certain things about those of us that support the death penalty. I want you to know why I support the death penalty. I support the death penalty because I believe in certain very limited cases, very limited instances, people who commit the ultimate crime deserve the ultimate penalty. I don't revel in the death penalty. I don't like the death penalty. I would prefer that no one in this state ever be sentenced to the death penalty again because no crime so heinous is ever committed. But the reality is it probably will be. But what I am troubled by is the constant arguments on both...on the side of Senator Chambers and Senator Brashear, that those of us on this side of the argument are pandering to our constituents, or posturing for this or that, or we're not...we're immoral because we are arguing what we are arguing. In my district, 90 percent of the people support the death penalty and now that doesn't make it right, necessarily, but that shows that there are a great number of people who believe as I do, and in a representative form of government, I don't think there is anything wrong with coming to the floor of this Legislature and representing your constituents. That's what I'm doing. I think across the state of Nebraska you are going to find a huge number of people who believe the Bible literally and would argue an eye for an eye. I think you are going to find a huge number of people that believe that. Is it immoral for me to come and argue on their behalf? I don't think so. I think, in fact, they would argue that it's moral, that it's necessary, that I'm doing my duty by arguing on their behalf. You know the other thing I can't help but bring up is last year we authorized a study to determine whether the death penalty is applied fairly. And here we are, not even a year after we authorized the study, and Senators Chambers and Brashear are arguing that it's not, that we need to change the law already because the death penalty is not being applied fairly. We haven't even waited for the results of that study. Why did we authorize the study if it's a predetermined conclusion? Why...I am starting to wonder why we decided to spend the money. We've already determined it's not being applied fairly. Here we are again trying to change the law less than a year after we had the argument last year. Well, let me tell you, folks, there's always going to be subjectivity in the way the death penalty is meted out. Nebraska law says