

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

January 24, 2000 LB 509

the advancement of LB 509, Senator Bromm.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. I've wanted to speak on this bill but I wanted to listen carefully to the arguments this morning, and there were many good arguments made. And I think that, with all due respect to the power of the county attorneys, that the arguments being made by Senator Matzke and Senator Bruning and several others, Senator Bourne's thoughtful discussion, are arguments that they are making based on their beliefs and their background regardless of where the county attorneys stand on an issue. I think it came down to, and it comes down to whether or not we want to make a significant change in the crimes that are subject to death penalty at this point in time. And I think...I can't say who voted for what reason in the last vote, but I think that's a major consideration. I think this body decided last year that it's willing to look at the imposition of the death penalty, willing to have as good a study as possible, but not...not ready at this point to take a significant portion of the people who are on death row and say we no longer are going to impose the death penalty for that kind of crime. I, for one, would personally have a horrible time with my conscience and my vote if I cast a vote which allowed yet another appeal and possibly another trial for some of those that are sitting on death row, without singling out any names. I would have problems with that. If this bill were coupled with a reasonable measure to put some restriction and some finality to the numbers of appeals that we see, I might be able to rethink my position. There has to be some balance here. There has to be some effort made to balance the law for those who feel that the appeals go on and on and on, and even though we have the death penalty, it really is never carried out versus those that want to reduce the number of crimes that are subject to the death penalty. That balance isn't here and that balance hasn't been on the floor for awhile. And I suspect that it will be difficult to get a measure like this through until we address some of those other things. And I hope that we can do that. I know it's difficult, and I give Senator Brashear and Senator Chambers, whoever worked on the amendments, a lot of credit for trying to craft as good an amendment and proposal as they could under the circumstances. But this body, I don't think, is ready to wholesale forget the death penalty for the kinds of crimes that those people on death