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LB 1285

Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I want Senator Matzke to know that I have a business relationship with US West. I have a contractual relationship with US West, so I'm in a position to talk about my company and I'm here to tell everybody on the floor that my company is not in need of our solicitude in terms of this provision of the law hurting them financially. They would laugh at it. They'd say, if we had to give \$10,000 a day, if we did that for 30 days, \$300,000, so what; it's cheaper to do that than to comply. When you put maximums, you put these huge multi-billion-dollar operations in a position to say it's more feasible for us, from a financial point of view, to violate the law and let us run up this maximum amount that can assessed against us and then we continue to violate the law and we make up that little amount with no trouble at all. I'm certain that most everybody on the floor is aware of what the automobile industry was doing even when they knew about defects that were life threatening. Their policy was to avoid a recall of all these defective vehicles because of the expense involved, and they calculated how many judgments would likely accrue from the people who would be seriously injured or killed as a result of these defects, and they calculated the loss of human life into their total amount of profit and determined that it will be cheaper to pay off those judgments for people seriously injured and killed than to recall all these defective vehicles, plus the bad image of that particular company that might result from having to acknowledge that they put a defective vehicle on the market. These big companies do not negotiate with peewee states like Nebraska. They come in and they threaten, they bully, and they get their way. Since the Public Service Commission is the agency created by the constitution of this state to regulate this and other areas of activity that impact on all of the citizens means that the drafters of the constitution saw a compelling need to put some agency in charge of looking after the public's interest. It is not possible for each individual to stand up to any one of these companies. It's difficult enough for the Legislature to do it. The debate on this bill is merely demonstrating the power of those financial interests. Do you think for a minute that their primary goal is to give all the people hooked up to their lines exemplary service? Absolutely not. Their ultimate goal is to