

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

March 2, 2000

LB 709, 915

vote aye, those opposed nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 37 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 709.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: LB 709 is advanced. Mr. Clerk, LB 915.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 915 was a bill introduced by Senator Vrtiska. (Read title.) Introduced on January 5 of this year, referred to Business and Labor, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill at this time, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Vrtiska, you're recognized to open on LB 915.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. LB 915 is what I would consider to be a simple bill which seeks to address a problem that employers...employers see in having their experience accounts charged for unemployment benefits provided to employees who quit work due to a nonwork-connected illness. In this circumstance, LB 915 would provide that benefits would not be charged against employer's experience account. The thing that I want to emphasize is that this change in LB 915 does not, and I emphasize does not alter or affect the eligibility of a claimant for unemployment benefits. LB 915 only goes to the question of how the cost of the benefits will be borne within the employment system. Currently, employers experience accounts are not charged when an employee, number one, leaves voluntarily without good cause or, number two, is discharged for misconduct in connection with work. The wisdom of these provisions are essential to protect the employer from the unemployment charging where the separation occurred through no fault of the employer. LB 915 would simply add a third noncharge in a situation where the employee quit because of a nonwork-connected illness. Again, the worker would still be eligible for unemployment benefits but they are not chargeable directly to the employer. LB 915 would end a frustrating situation for employers where an employee quits because of an illness and still remains able and available for other work and, of course, would still be eligible for unemployment benefits either as a result of recovery from the illness or the ability to perform less strenuous work. The separation was through no fault of the employer and yet the