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January 14, 2004 LB 227

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We now go to General File. As the Speaker stated before, we will pass over LB 270. Mr. Clerk, next bill.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, LB 227 was introduced by Senator Aguilar, Byars, Price, and Thompson. (Read title.) The bill was read for the first time on January 10 of last year, referred to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. That committee reported the bill to General File with no committee amendments.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Aguilar, you're recognized to open on advancement of LB 227.

SENATOR AGUILAR: Thank you, Mr. President. Today I bring before you a bill that will save the lives of a few children, and save the quality of life for others. Each year, children and adults riding in the cargo area of a truck, or even the hood of a car, are injured or killed. This bill is an effort to reduce the number of persons under the age of 18 involved in this type of accident. When I introduced this bill last session, a letter to the editor in the Omaha World-Herald told the story of a young child riding in the cargo area of his dad's pickup. Another driver ran a red light and hit the truck. The boy was thrown out of the truck, and then ran over by the truck his father was driving. The boy died at the scene, cradled in his father's arms. Even though his father may have been driving carefully, the actions of another contributed to the death of the elementary-age boy. This is one example of many similar accidents that bring young people to the emergency rooms every year. Exemptions in this bill include people in parades, or those who may be in the back of the truck in order to do their job. It also does not apply to a vehicle that has added seats to a cargo area, as long as those seats meet and exceed federal safety standards. If a violation of this nature occurs, an officer can ticket the driver. There would be no points deducted from the driver's license record. The fine for this offense is a minimal \$50. Educational efforts by organizations such as Tri-Cities SAFE KIDS has reduced the numbers of passengers riding inappropriately, thereby reducing the number