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January 16, 2004 LB 279

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Hartnett. Senator Chambers, on the Baker amendment to LB 279.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I want to say again that I'm going to support this amendment because the body agreed to a prior amendment to make the issuance period for those plates six years. I don't know ultimately how I will vote for the bill, but it ought to at least be in the form which would make it workable if the Legislature should enact it. If this were the kind of bill that I had a strong, principled position against, I would not willingly allow anything to be added to the bill to help it or to correct it, but this is not one of those bills. If the Legislature agrees to enact it into law, and the Governor signs it, I don't think a great amount of harm will be done to the public. What Senator Wehrbein and I and maybe some others, whom I didn't hear, were talking about was the loss of money that may occur as a result of people not registering their vehicles on time. If anything, that's of benefit to the public. Somebody short on cash may be able to float awhile before having to spring for the cost of registering a vehicle. The discussion so far has been, at least from my standpoint, my purpose has been to point out that it can be counted on that there will be a loss of money based on the extended life of these plates, but that loss is not due to anything other than enforcement not taking place. Giving law enforcement, giving the devils, their due, they cannot enforce every law that the Legislature puts on the books, and they should not even try. Priorities have to be established. If a vehicle were going down the street coughing smoke and you know that the car is being fueled by number nine coal, and when the smoke clears sufficiently for you to get a look at the vehicle you see it's dragging a muffler, an officer may stop that car. That vehicle itself poses a hazard. But the mere failure of the owner of the car to register it does not pose a hazard to the public. It does not cause the vehicle to be defective. It does not impair the ability of the driver to operate the car properly. So the public is not harmed if the license plate is going to last for six years before a new one must be issued. If these shortsighted officials agree to this proposal, the record will make it abundantly clear...