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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 962

on amendment FA1523 to FA1502 to LB 962.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Mr. President and members of the Legislature, because I have another tangential issue that relates to what we do in the Legislature, I'm going to get it out of the way, to the extent that I can, on this first amendment that I'm offering. I know it's going to upset my young friend Senator Friend, because I'm basing it on a World-Herald article in this morning's paper, page 8B. The headline is, "Johanns wants debate on lethal injection bill." Then a subheadline, "Meanwhile, death penalty opponent Ernie Chambers has the Governor's mental health proposal in his sights." A couple of paragraphs: Governor Mike Johanns, to the music of (singing) whatever Lola wants, Lola gets, but Mikey won't get what he wants in the Legislature without a fight. "Governor Mike Johanns said Wednesday that he thinks Nebraska lawmakers can adopt lethal injection yet this session and that a special session won't be needed. 'The time has arrived to debate this issue and deal with it,' the Governor said. But State Senator Ernie Chambers of Omaha, the Legislature's most ardent death penalty opponent, on Wednesday targeted Johanns' proposal to restructure mental health services in Nebraska as among the initiatives at risk in his effort to stop lethal injection." Skipping to the second column: "Johanns said he would not yield to threats." Going to the last paragraph: "Johanns said that if lawmakers don't pass lethal injection this year, they run the risk of being being forced into special session to change Nebraska's execution method." He doesn't yield to threats, but he seems fully capable of making them. And I want him to know that I don't yield either. When a case is presented to the Nebraska Supreme Court, or any appellate court, the parties are required to state what are called the facts of the case. Then the court lays out the facts. So, although I've quoted it before, I'm going to recite the beginning of Rudyard's...Rudyard Kipling's The Ballad of East and West. "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat; But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!" I'll speak of my strength, I don't know about the other person, but there are two of us standing eyeball to