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FLOOR DEBATE

March 25, 2004      LB 172

SENATOR CHAMBERS: When you say one minute, then I think you said time; and other points when you said time I thought you said one minute. But probably the minute is gone now, so I will relinquish the floor. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I should speak more clearly, Senator. Senator Foley, on the motion to return.

SENATOR FOLEY: Thank you again, Mr. President and members. I want to pick up where Senator Brown left off. I thought her comments were rather thoughtful, although she reaches a different conclusion than I do. She acknowledged that the law does need to be changed, and she picked up on some comments that Senator Smith offered regarding alternatives to abortion. That's really what this bill provides. It provides the schools the flexibility. Because let's look at the law right now. The law right now says, you schools, we're going to force you; by October 1 every year you must, you must distribute this abortion information. Well, what happens after October 1? The law is silent. The law is silent for 90 percent of the school year as to what the schools are supposed to do. They're given that flexibility. We've trusted them with that flexibility all these years. Was it 31, 32 years now since Roe v. Wade? We've never told the schools what to do for 90 percent of the school year. We've only told them that they must give this information out early in the year. With this bill, their flexibility is simply extended throughout the entire school year. As these delicate situations come up, they can deal with them as they feel most appropriate. These are sensitive questions. We've trusted the schools to handle this for 90 percent of the school year. My bill simply says we're going to trust you for the whole year. I'm not interested in hanging up abortion posters in classrooms. I'm not interested in abortion hot lines forced onto the public schools. I don't think that takes us in the right direction. Naturally, I urge you not to pull this bill back off Final Reading. The opponents of this bill have hammered away for 12 hours now on this bill on two-plus rounds of debate. And during those 12 hours what did we learn? Well, we learned about Mad Cow disease on round one. We learned about U.S. foreign policy in Afghanistan in round two. We learned about the proper use of prepositions. Let's stick to the issue. The issue is we should