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FLOOR DEBATE

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to early adulthood. Historically, the age of majority was tied to the drinking age and was increased and decreased with that age. Today the drinking age no longer has any connection to the age of majority, and the age of majority has remained at an arbitrary age of 19. The result is a bifurcation of Nebraska law that does not seem to make any sense. To illustrate this point, 18-year-old young adults can enlist in the military, vote in elections, be executed for committing capital crimes, and have an abortion without the consent or notification of parents or legal guardians. Yet we make these same young people wait another year, till the age of 19, to sign leases, open checking accounts, or receive medical care without parental consent. Additionally, this has led to rather glaring inconsistencies in our laws. For example, an 18-year-old woman can ask for medical care for her child, but cannot receive medical care for herself unless she has an adult cosign. So a young mother in the state of Nebraska can be a responsible parent for her own child, but she is not responsible under the eyes of the law for herself. As we have researched and reviewed this standard in our law, there appears to be no real policy argument or procedural reason for this distinction. One of the biggest issues brought to my attention is the unavailability or lack of availability of affordable housing for our young adults. There are many legitimate reasons for 18-year-olds to seek affordable housing. But because our state statutes do not give them legal standing to enter into a legal contract, property owners are hesitant to rent them apartments, even though under case law they legally can. During the past few years, I have been working with groups, especially here in the Lincoln area, and have heard about kids in Nebraska who have resorted to living in their cars or other unbeneficial locations due to this lack of opportunity. However, each of us know that kids as young as junior high receive credit card applications, which are also contracts. These are the same kids who can...these same kids can contract for a credit card. But because Nebraska statutes do not recognize what the courts have ruled, that minors can contract for services, the landlords will not recognize them under the law to rent them an apartment. Some have also expressed concerns about changing the age of majority and how it will affect divorce and child custody issues. Child support and custody fall solely within the jurisdictions of the court. They