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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, in case anybody missed it when Senator Beutler was talking, he made a very important point. If a contract already exists, and what we would put into the law without my amendment...or with my amendment, although my amendment, if it's adopted, would not have the impact that the current language would. If a law is passed after a contract is in place, that law cannot impair or change the requirements and obligations created by that contract. The U.S. Constitution has put up that protection for people who have entered contracts, so that legislators who may come along later and decide they want to harm one party or the other, will alter the contract or attempt to nullify it. A lot of people don't realize it, but when the U.S. Constitution was being hammered out, the dispute was not just between big states and little states, as they say. There is a very great amount of discomfort in this country about racism and the existence of slavery, so they will not face head-on the impact that slavery--meaning the enslavement of people of my complexion and derivation, so that we could be treated like cows, pigs, and chickens, owned as property, treated as property, disposed of as property, but without the protection of animals. In those days, it was against the law for a man to have sex with an animal, but it was not against the law for any white man to force sexual activity on any black person, male or female, even little girls. Thomas Jefferson would have been deemed a pedophile today, and have committed statutory rape. And it probably was forceable rape. And they don't want to talk about it, but I do. So it was know that with the attitude that existed in the South and in the North, that there could be attempts by the legislatures to do things that would modify contracts that they didn't like for a political, a racist, or any other reason. The legislatures were going to be made to stay out of that. So that provision about nonimpairment of contracts obtains in the area that I'm talking about, even though, if you read the history of that particular provision, you may not get from it what I'm telling you. But if I'm the one whose foot is under a 500-pound table, I know what pain is produced thereby in injury. If you're sitting there at the table eating, you don't know that there's any pain. You ask me, Ernie, what you hollering about? I say, man, I'm hurting. And you say, well, I'm not hurting. Well,