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FLOOR DEBATE

March 30, 2005 LB 361, 401

legislation that will be good for Nebraskans. I'd appreciate your support. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Bourne. You've heard the closing. The question before the body is, shall LB 361 advance to E & R Initial? All in favor vote aye; opposed, nay. The question before the body is advancement of LB 361. Have you all voted who care to? Record please, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 40 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 361.

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 361 does advance. We now go to General File, 2005 committee second priority bills. Mr. Clerk, LB 401.

CLERK: LB 401, by Senator Fischer. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 12, referred to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. The bill was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0369, Legislative Journal page 493.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Fischer, to open.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. The purpose of this bill is to provide a voting alternative for large geographic counties with populations of less than 7,000 in Nebraska. As a result of the Help America Vote Act, each polling site will be required by 2006 to have certain pieces of costly equipment available, such as touch screen devices. This will prove very expensive to counties with a small budget. It may not be the wisest course to purchase this equipment for the use of 13 or 38 people that might reside in some of these more sparsely populated precincts. Additionally, it is getting more and more difficult to find polling sites in these areas that meet the accessibility features required of all polling sites. Under LB 401, the Secretary of State, upon the request of the county election commissioner, can designate one or all of the precincts in a county as mail-in-only precincts. Under this scenario, no polling place will be set up in the precinct. Every registered voter will receive a ballot by mail 20 days prior to the election. The voter will need to return the ballot