

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 12, 2005

LB 426

talk about the issue from a different perspective. This is not about anybody's agenda. It's about discrimination. And it always amazes me that people who have never experienced discrimination refuse to believe that it actually exists. Well, I will tell you it does exist. It's alive and well in Nebraska, and discrimination of all kinds exists and we need to do everything we can to make sure that it doesn't go on. And I applaud Senator Chambers for bringing this forward. If he would like any more time, he may have the rest of mine. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Chambers says he does not need it at this moment. Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. Well, it's time for the fat lady to sing again and I'll keep it brief; same song, different key. I still believe that there are many, many other morbidly obese people who are discriminated against because of their appearance. They are made fun of, they are mocked, they are denied jobs, they are denied opportunities, and they are denied even proper accommodations in public settings. People in wheelchairs are more accommodated than morbidly obese folks. So, like Senator Friend, I remember my vote the first time around and I know that, as being morbidly obese myself, I could not legislate anybody's attitude toward me. It would be nice, I suppose, to have a law that says that people are not supposed to discriminate against me because I'm fat, but I saw the looks of the people when they looked at me and I know the opportunities that I missed because of how I looked, and the things that people assumed about me that were not true. Any legislation that this Legislature could have crafted back when I was that size would not have changed the stares, the looks, and the unfair treatment that I received. I still submit to you that there are thousands more of those people who deserve some protection that are not receiving it, and I just don't believe that with only 17 other states recognizing this, on the federal level...on the federal level it's not been recognized, and 17 states do, I don't see that as a mandate, certainly. But again, I think we need to focus on our personal attitudes and cleaning those up and I don't believe that we can do that through