

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

May 17, 2005

LB 13, 312

here, LB 13, gut it, and insert the language of my bill, which is languishing in the Judiciary Committee, which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. I let him know that I am going to run this amendment. The rest of those that you see on your gadget following this amendment will be pulled. I am not going to hold LB 13 hostage and have it both ways. I'm going to offer this amendment. I'm very serious about it, and I think that my colleagues have shown what I consider to be a remarkable degree of understanding, and I hate to use the word "kindness," when we're doing only that which we ought to do, but kindheartedness toward people who have been kept outside the pale for all of the time that Nebraska has been a state. A version of this amendment has received 23 votes, 24 votes and, in one case, 25 votes. There is a goal I would like to achieve before I leave this Legislature, and that is the abolition of the death penalty. Whether I will see that or not while a member of this Legislature, whether I will see that during my lifetime, I cannot predict. But I will tell all of you that I have been pleasantly surprised by the support that has been shown by my colleagues for doing away with a type of discrimination that is cruel, insidious, invidious, and vicious. When I offered my bill this last time before the Judiciary Committee, the Catholic Conference, as it is called, which usually sends people to oppose it, were not there to oppose it. The types of people who opposed it talked about people having sex with children, animals, and other very low-level types of comments. That demonstrated the company that is being kept by those who oppose doing away with discrimination. Senator Combs regularly mentions the cruel things she saw happening to people who are obese, and especially those who are morbidly so. But because she cannot obtain--I don't know that she has ever tried, even--some kind of protected status for obese people, should not be a basis to retain discrimination against others. I will tell Senator Combs that I will never, no matter how long I live, eradicate discrimination based on race, color, national origin in America. There might be a chance on national origin, if you also don't have a complexion such as mine, which gives away the game, and at which the line is drawn when it comes to equality in all things. But because of the type of discrimination that black people have experienced in this country, I'm very sensitive to discrimination against others. I will never say