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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 312, 425, 427

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Presidents, members of the Legislature, I do intend to try to amend a couple of bills, LB 427 and LB 425. Still, what is being presented here with this amendment on this bill is reasonable. The business community has come here to raid the treasury, purely and simply. By the time it's over, hundreds of millions of dollars will have been taken from what they refer to as the revenue stream. These companies are taking something from the state. They will not oppose this amendment. I handed out an article, along with others on that page, describing Microsoft's reversal of its stand on a bill in Washington. They had at first favored a bill prohibiting discrimination against gay and lesbian people. They switched from that to the most damnable position, based on what everybody says, which is one of neutrality. Then, upon further review, they came back to their original position and supported protecting the rights of gay and lesbian people. And this is what was said by the chief executive of the company. Quote: After looking at the question from all sides, I've concluded that diversity in the workplace is such an important issue for our business that it should be included in our legislative agenda. This man's name is Steve Ballmer, B-a-l-l-m-e-r, and his company is now officially, once again, supporting gay rights legislation, as it's called. We're dealing with groups, firms who are coming to the state to get something. Is it too much to ask that they not discriminate? That's all this amendment says. I don't want the Catch 22 that Senator Landis is proposing, but at least he said he's not going to vote against the proposition. My arguments are not to persuade Senator Landis, because he already is persuaded. He is in that delicate position of the person about whom all are speaking well--the World-Herald, Mick Mines, everybody who speaks. And you know what the "Bibble" said, Senator Landis? Woe unto you when all men and women speak well of you. Woe! W-o-e. Now that we have some perspective and context here, Senator Landis is prepared to abide by the will of the body. The body's will should be to prohibit these companies from discriminating. Do you want to send the message, since the issue is being brought, that they can? They now know, if they didn't before, that the law does not protect gay and lesbian people from discrimination in the workplace. The statutory scheme which does that protects only those who are mentioned explicitly, and gay and lesbian people are not