

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

May 31, 2005

LB 645

of thing, but I think that we should be pretty proud of the fact that in Nebraska, we haven't had any legislative scandals, so to speak, like they've had in other states, like Florida, like South Carolina, like Wisconsin, for heaven's sakes. Tennessee, California. They've all had very major legislative scandals, people on the take, people in the Legislature voting a certain way and accepting money for voting that certain way. So I wanted to say that I think that we should take a great deal of pride in the fact that we have a very clean system in Nebraska. That isn't to say that that couldn't change at any time and that we shouldn't be wary. But we do have in place accountability and disclosure reporting laws, which are available to the public, and we do have conflict of interest laws, which also are incumbent upon us to use, when necessary. If we were a full-time Legislature, it probably wouldn't be as much of a gray area. But because we have people in this Legislature that come from all occupations and all walks of life, they are here representing not only themselves, but perhaps the industry or the occupation that they're in. It is very difficult, I think, in this Legislature, to get away from the fact that if you're a farmer, that there might not be some interest from you on voting on a particular bill, or an attorney, or somebody who works for the healthcare industry, or whatever. The most important thing, I think, is to be aware of what conflicts are, and to declare those conflicts of interest when they occur, and then let people decide. If you decide not to vote and you have a conflict of interest, presumably you could argue that some of your constituency isn't being represented, and your district is not getting a vote. And I think that's the way...that's why we've written the conflict of interest laws the way we have. You can declare your conflict of interest, but you can still vote. Now if you have a direct financial benefit from that, then I think that there ought to be some thought given to whether you really should vote or not. But having said all that, I just wanted to say, Senator Chambers, that I'm proud of this, the Legislature and the process we have in Nebraska. Can it be improved? Probably. Do we always need to be wary? Yes. But I didn't want to leave the impression out there with the public that we're a bunch...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.