

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

March 29, 2006

LB 925

some of those on the books at .16. Further, LB 925 seeks to strengthen and clarify certain portions of Nebraska's existing DUI and DUI-related laws in the following ways: increases the penalties for offenders who leave the scene of property damage, injury, and fatal accidents. In fact, just this past weekend, I didn't hand this out, but there is an article relating to yet another example of what kind of effect leaving the scene of an accident can cause in our society. A nine-year-old boy was struck and killed near 32nd and Q Streets by a driver who fled the scene. The driver was actually apprehended later that night, but largely because the crime of leaving a scene of a fatal accident is just a misdemeanor, he was allowed to post bail, failed to appear at his arraignment on Monday. I guess the leniency of the law, especially when compared to the penalties for DUI, felony motor vehicle homicide and DUI resulting in serious bodily injury, quite honestly gives drivers the incentive to run. We need to take away that incentive. LB 925 also increases the penalties for motor vehicle homicides caused by DUI; it requires the imposition of a 15-year license revocation as part of any sentence for felony operation of motor vehicle during suspension, something which in some cases can even be a greater...we feel, a greater deterrent than jail time; and lastly, it requires that all convicted DUI offenders to receive a chemical dependence assessment...it requires all convicted DUI offenders to receive a chemical dependence assessment from a certified drug and alcohol counselor. Finally, I'd like to thank our Judiciary Committee. I'd like to thank Pat Bourne, the Chairman; Jeff Beaty, of course, the legal counsel; along with Attorney General Jon Bruning and their staff for the hard work they put on in this bill. I'd like you to consider the following. Under Nebraska law, under current Nebraska law, in our lifetime, in the lifetime of someone who gets convicted for passing two bad checks--and this was actually brought out in the hearing--the lifetime of someone who gets convicted for passing two bad checks for a mere \$5, that person would be subject to the same penalty as someone who commits four or more DUIs over a 12-month period, Class IV felony. Leads me to this question: Which of these two courses of conduct should our criminal justice system and we as lawmakers should try to prevent? I believe LB 925 goes a long way in answering that question. Senator Dwite Pedersen and Senator Brashear on