

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

April 4, 2006

LB 385

you're convicted, you cannot file an appeal until after a sentence has been pronounced. That's when that proceeding is completed, for the purposes of filing an appeal. You can also at that point ask for a new trial. So a person awaiting sentencing may, after the sentence is imposed, prevail on the court to grant a new trial, during which the person will be found not guilty, or an appeal can be filed and a person not have to enter jail or prison, as the case might be, until that appeal is completed. That appeal could result in an exoneration. Although Senator Johnson and others exult over the capabilities inherent in DNA to exonerate the innocent, put the clamps on the guilty, DNA science is no better than those who are administering it. There have been DNA laboratories all over this country which have been found to be operated so incompetently, so carelessly that hundreds of cases which relied on DNA evidence have to be reexamined, retried, and some people have been let out because the only evidence was this DNA, and it was tainted, the tests were improperly done, the person doing the test was not qualified. So contrary to what you might see on television, the idea you might get from listening to people who praise DNA to the highest without talking about the downside, you may think it's well nigh infallible. But DNA has been the excuse for dragnet sweeps throughout black communities all over this country, including Omaha. I had to go to court as a nonlawyer, by the way, meaning I'm not licensed to practice law, to prevail on a judge to open documents which would show why this DNA sweep was allowed, and to obtain other information the public was entitled to. So when victimization occurs, it generally befalls black people and poor white people. So I do not want willy-nilly to spread that DNA net, and I don't care what other states have done. A lot of them have been lobbied by some outfit in Washington State or somewhere out there, which tells these people throughout the country who are in legislatures, you need to make everybody be tested, or give a DNA sample. That outfit has a financial interest. Two years from now when I'm no longer in this Legislature, if term limits takes effect, I tremble--that's an overstatement, but it's effective--I tremble for the welfare of the citizens of this state, when they have people in this Legislature who don't care about the rights of the public, who do not inform themselves to the point where they're even aware that bad legislation is going