

April 9, 1975

SPEAKER: Record.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 4 nays, Mr. President.

SPEAKER: Committee amendments adopted. Senator Swigart.

SENATOR SWIGART: Mr. President and colleagues, the reason for the bill to begin with, and incidentally I don't object to the amendment because it figures it out probably a little more refined arrangement than we had in the original bill, so I don't object to the amendment. I think it brings about about the same thing. The reason for the bill was to prevent school buses from being so packed that the driver, sometimes, can't even see out and we wanted to reach a happy medium. Now there is a lot of, the PTA people and mothers and fathers who would have liked to have held it down to simply two persons per seat and we checked to see what this would do with the haulers and we found, particularly with Keystone, that it would have meant a raise in the fare, if we would have simply said, two people to the seat, and it seems to be logical that more than two people to the seat can be handled in the case of smaller children and so they tried to hit a happy medium and frequently, and I think surely 50% of the time, three kids can set in a seat. And so I think this is a happy medium. I think we are all aware that if you happen to be hauling high school kids and that only, and not the elementary children, you would have some standing but I think this is a good first step and then we can judge the performance of this legislation. But this is an improvement because there was no limit and quite frequently the buses were simply too overloaded that the driver, I think it was very much of a danger. He not only couldn't see out but he couldn't see the students getting on and off and I think that is a very dangerous thing and that is the reason for the bill and I think this is a happy medium and will certainly not be offensive and I don't believe that it will cause a raise of the fare. Incidentally, there is a provision in the bill that would allow, in the case of an emergency, if the bus ahead broke down, just getting to school that day, they could load it up full for that emergency and I think it is pretty well explained so that they couldn't do that every day and call it an emergency. So I would like to move for the advancement of LB 132 as amended.

SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Senator Cavanaugh.

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, just a couple things I would like to say about this bill. It is a compromise and I don't consider it a very desirable one but apparently a necessary one. We had trouble getting it out of committee anyway. We have got a situation in Omaha with the Keystone Bus Company that has continuously and repetitiously overloaded their buses to a dangerous extent, to a hazardous extent for the school children. I am hopeful that this...and they also don't appear to consider themselves and the school boards don't appear to consider Keystone contracting with parents on a private basis to be covered by the current statute. They seem to be outside of it. They would at least be under this statute and perhaps result in some reduction of their excessive overloading of school buses and they do it for a profit. I don't...I think the