

May 1, 1975

PRESIDENT: We now have Senator Simpson's amendment, but I'm going to follow the sequence as your lights came on anyway. Senator Kelly, we are discussing Senator Simpson's amendment.

SENATOR KELLY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, what I have to say will work with Simpson's amendment or the bill. First of all, school districts certainly are legislative business. We could tell that by the slip of paper we received the other day where the Legislature was intervening in the Omaha school district business in 1887, if I remember correctly. Now I'm aware in Grand Island that the school board members are against district elections. It must be remembered that they have been successful candidates in a city-wide election. Therefore, obviously, they would be like anybody else -- they like what's successful for them. I'm further aware that the people in Grand Island prefer district elections. They prefer district elections for very simple reasons. Number one is that peers live in neighborhoods. The word "neighbor" is somebody that you know. That is what happens in the neighborhoods is that they know each other. They know who would be a good representative on the school board and who would not be good representatives on the school board. Candidates can be available on this basis because they can afford what little bit of expense will be involved in campaigning in a neighborhood to be on the school board. They'll be able to take the time to visit the voters in the neighborhood so that they can be elected to the school board. When this becomes a city-wide process even in a community the size of Grand Island to many of our citizens it becomes an overwhelming obstacle for running for office. They refuse to do it. They sit on their hands and complain about the way the school district is run. I support elections by districts for school boards, for cities, or anyother governmental subdivisions.

PRESIDENT: Senator Swigart.

SENATOR SWIGART: Mr. President, colleagues, I wanted to tell Mr. Chambers, whether or not you run by district or at large it's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. I have won them all since 1954 to '73, except one. I oppose the district elections because I think mainly our experience in Omaha is one that we like to have everyone that's either serving on a school board or the council to be responsible to all the people. Maybe we're unique in the city of Omaha, but that's the way we want it. I like that way. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Dickinson. Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise in support of the Simpson amendment and in support of the bill. I hope that I don't hurt your bill too much, Senator Chambers, by speaking in support of it. I'd like to also say that, to Senator Swigart, that he thinks we should be responsible to all of the people by virtue of vote . . . running in an at large election for the school districts in Omaha, Nebraska. I think that Senator Swigart