

we will make the penalties the same for vandalism and for theft, and by doing that the practical consequence is that for vandalism of over a \$1000 we are increasing the penalty from a Class IV to a Class III penalty. So we would be increasing the penalty in that one instance. The second reason and just as important to the committee that we handled it in this manner was to retain the integrity of the criminal code structure. A few years ago we had a massive revision of the criminal code and we consolidated all different kinds of criminal statutes that were all over the place in our statutes into a comprehensive and complete code. And where we had statutes that said, for example, if you steal a pig, the penalty is such and such, and if you steal a horse, the penalty is such and such, we condensed them all down so that conflicts that had grown up over the years and rendered our system irrational were consolidated into comprehensive sections that rationalized the whole process. So we didn't talk about stealing a horse or a pig or a radio or whatever, we talked about values. We translated the thing into a value and we made it all come under our theft statutes, for example. We wanted to stay away from the idea of having a different penalty for a particular item, for a particular institution, whether it be a church or a public school or a house. We wanted to stick to a comparison that would be fair to all who are accused under the law. So that is why we took the approach of the committee amendment rather than fracturing the law to have a different law to apply to churches, or a different law to apply to schools, or a different law to apply to community centers. And with that, I would ask the adoption of the committee amendment.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hoagland is recognized.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Mr. President and colleagues, I distributed a memo to you from Senator Vard Johnson and me, and Senator Johnson is in an Executive Board meeting right now. In that memo we are asking you essentially to reject the committee amendments that have been offered by Senator Beutler. Now let me tell you why. This is a bill, as the memo indicates on page 1 and on page 2, that was brought in last year and was voted out unanimously by the Judiciary Committee the day after the bill was heard. It is a bill that was offered for two reasons. Number one, to increase the vandalism penalties, but secondly and equally important to make a political statement that here in Nebraska we are no longer going to tolerate the vandalism of religious institutions, cemeteries, schools and community centers, but particularly churches and synagogues. Now we have had a major problem in my legislative district up in Omaha and in