

March 6, 1984

LR 235

this very same way. I would like to ask you that think the way I do to get up and speak on this bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I am a co-sponsor of this constitutional amendment and I certainly appreciate the Constitutional Revision Committee advancing this to General File so the whole body will have an opportunity to debate the issue. I feel that we need a change. We need a change now in the proceedings of our Judicial Qualifications Commission. The system we have at the present time is not working. People are not happy with the system. Some of our citizens have filed complaints with the Commission and they have not received any information on what happened to that complaint and so they are unhappy. They are very unhappy. In other words, they want to know what action did the Commission take and this constitutional amendment would change this. This constitutional amendment would say that the findings would be available to the public. At the present time they are confidential. I feel that the public wants to know and I feel that they need to know that an investigation is completed and what are the findings of this investigation? All other public officials are subject to complaints and charges. Every member of this body is subject to that. This information is public. Newspapers print the story. Radios and TVs air this information. We can see the public exposure of some of our state officials are receiving on the Commonwealth issue and certainly the public has a right to know. I feel that judges should be treated the same way. They should be on the same standard with other public officials. We need a change and we need it badly. If the Legislature passes this constitutional amendment it will appear on the ballot this fall. The voters will have an opportunity to vote on this issue and they will make the decision. If this body does nothing I feel that the citizens will promote a petition drive to then elect the judges. At the present time they are appointed by the Governor. The citizens in Nebraska and especially northeast Nebraska have lost a lot of respect for our judicial system. In fact, I feel it is a shame. I say to you here today, let's try and correct this before it is

9051