

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on the motion to advance the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: LB 283 is advanced. LB 345.

CLERK: (Read title.) The bill was read on January 17 of this year referred to the Revenue Committee for hearing, advanced to General File. There are committee amendments pending.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, LB 345 is the pet of Senator David Landis. As the Chairman of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, Senator Landis struggled for a long period of time to reconcile two immovable objects, one being the Auditor of Public Accounts, and the other one being the State Tax Commissioner. The reconciliation that was required was this, the State Auditor said, I need to be able to audit the work that is being done by the Department of Revenue. The State Tax Commissioner said, well, you can audit everything that is not confidential. The Auditor of Public Accounts said, but I need to be able to look at some of these tax returns. The Revenue Commissioner said, but those returns are confidential. So the Auditor of Public Accounts said, well, I can't do a good audit of the Department of Revenue. So the Department of Revenue said, well, that's tough, trust us. Well, this is an issue that Senator Landis worked on a long time. He is one of the great compromisers in the Nebraska Legislature. As a result of his hard work and strong efforts the Auditor, Ray A.C. Johnson, and the Tax Commissioner, Donna Karnes, worked out an arrangement whereby the Auditor of Public Accounts could, from this point forward and hereafter if LB 345 was to pass, do a certain confidential random audit in the revenue office so that it would know that everything that was going on there was up to snuff. Nobody...there were no serious encroachments on confidentiality and the auditor was satisfied with what was going to happen. Now the committee has two amendments which simply make certain that everything that is done in that Department of Revenue is totally and absolutely confidential. Those two amendments both the Department of Revenue and the Auditor of Public Accounts had agreed to. Now there was a little bit of opposition to this