

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hefner, are you in opposition to it too?

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I support Section 12 because I think a senator should be able to vote even though he does have a conflict of interest. I think what is bothering Senator Landis, he feels that if we adopt this section, well, then there will be a move on to kill the whole bill and he doesn't want to lose the whole bill. But like I told you in my opening that this section prohibits any public official from using that person's office to obtain financial gain. But we have all, or usually do, we usually, when we have a conflict of interest we usually report that and so I think a person can still go ahead and vote on it. So I would support leaving this section in, Section 12 in the committee amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson, please.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I am a little surprised that Senator Landis has decided to take issue with Section 12 of the committee amendments, but it is his prerogative to do that. Let me lay it out for you as to why the committee put Section 12 in the bill. Our Political Accountability and Disclosure Act penalizes public officeholders who have conflict of interests and then act notwithstanding those conflict of interest and every now and then the Political Accountability and Disclosure Commission suggests that maybe a vote that one or more of us may cast in here conflicts with some other interest that we might have as a private citizen. Thus we might vote on a matter that affects the telephone company and yet we work for the phone company. Or we might vote on a matter that affects the lottery interests and yet we have a lottery interest. We might vote on a matter that affects agriculture and yet we are a farmer. The Political Accountability and Disclosure Commission has suggested that for us to cast the vote, for us to cast the vote on something about which we ostensibly have a conflict of interest violates the Political Accountability and Disclosure Act. So the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee when it considered this particular bill said, let's clarify it. And the clarification is very simple. It says, no vote that you and I exercise in here in and of itself, in and of itself, may be deemed a conflict of interest within the meaning of the Political Accountability and Disclosure Act. And the reason