

February 5, 1996 LB 754

authorization of the applicant, unless the applicant appeals a denial. The filing of an appeal will act as a release of the information for the purpose of the appeal. If the applicant requests a closed hearing, only the final order will be public record. Applicants will be issued conditional certificates or permits prior to the commissioner receiving the history if the applicant signs a statement identifying all convictions and the commissioner determines the applicant to be of suitable character and otherwise qualified. Conditional certificates are void upon receipt and review of the report by the commissioner. I said this legislation saddens me. It is sad that our nation has never had to impose so many regulations to make our classrooms safe. It is sad that no legislation can get at the root of the problem, but I believe it is necessary to improve our system so that we may also improve our ability to ensure that teachers in Nebraska are of good character. It will not foolproof the system, but it does remove a current barrier that blocks improving the system. I would also like to thank Senator Hilgert for prioritizing the bill. And with that, members, ask you for your support of LB 754. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Bohlke. Senator Hilgert, on the committee amendment.

SENATOR HILGERT: Yes, Madam Chairman, members. Senator Bohlke certainly made...had a good summary of the bill, so we won't get into the committee amendment and the need for it. I did want to explain to you why I chose this as my priority piece of legislation. When I first learned of this need I was, first of all, I was somewhat surprised that this policy hadn't already been in place. And then I was informed about the history of it and that we have had legislation pending, background checks, since 1989 onward. I was contacted by the Omaha PTA and the PTSA and was told that this has been in the body for quite some time, that this is the best chance it has to past, that, as Senator Bohlke alluded to, that we have the agreement of the Omaha...of the school districts, of the teachers, of the FTAs, all parties seem to believe that this bill is a good compromise. And I basically was moved by the individuals coming forward, especially Becky Schnobel, I think she's here today. And I thought if this thing has been in the body for so long we need to get it out, we need to get a vote on it. So I chose it as my priority bill and I'm happy to do so, I think it's needed. The committee amendments again only apply to...will only allow the