

February 12, 1996 LB 754

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Bohlke amendment is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Madam President.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. I rise still to oppose the bill, but more to state my position on the bill, even though I may be the only one opposing the bill and I understand that. I guess what I really don't like, people have asked me what the problem is with the bill, don't I want to find people that are child abusers and keep them out of the classroom. And, of course, the answer to that is yes, I don't want them in the classroom. But I guess one of my concerns are that there are lots of people in the state of Nebraska that deal with young people. There are a lot of different groups that deal with young people. You've got Boy Scout leaders, you've got Girl Scout leaders, you've got Brownie/Scout leaders, you've got counselors, you've got clergy with youth groups, you've got pediatricians that are with children all the time, and none of those groups are being asked to be fingerprinted to see if they have anything in their background that would disqualify them in the eyes of the public from being around children. Only teachers, all of a sudden, were picked, and not any teachers in Nebraska, per se, but only those teachers outside of Nebraska. And somehow a conservative group out there feels that this is going to be the solution to all of the problems, when in fact part of the difficulty of the bus drivers that they wanted to do is languishing in another bill that they have chosen not to even pursue. I don't understand why we want to just pick on portions of it, I don't understand why we pick on one different group and ignore all the rest, except I think it's some type of cause that somebody has and they really feel that this is going to somehow benefit everyone in the state of Nebraska. I don't think the bill is doable. If I have a record and I'm out of state all I have to do is be here five years and I still won't be fingerprinted. And it is true that any school district could fingerprint and get Nebraska stats now, but most don't, most don't. And there's a reason why they don't, it's because they believe in the professionalism of the teacher and they know that the people that they're interviewing and they feel they do a good job. So I guess my feel is if it was that important to Nebraskans they would have had their school boards be fingerprinting all along.