

March 28, 1973

(Begin Belt #2)

and I'm not opposed to the concept of student involvement. As a long-time career teacher, I think it's necessary. I think that the University administration should certainly have student participation on policy making committees. But I want you to look at this from the fact that we're talking now about constitutional elected officers. I have been on record for a long time in opposing any restrictions that prevents people from serving. I think that in the elective process the minimum age for voting should be the minimum age for holding that office. I believe that residency restrictions should be at a minimum and I would think that we would probably be in a position where there might be a hue and cry from other groups that wanted to be represented, not necessarily on this constitutional body but on other constitutional bodies. Once we get into the position where we start selecting and choosing the profession, the occupation, the age level, the degree of training, whatever, for constitutional elected offices, we have destroyed the concept of an open democracy. The process is now more available to students to serve in these capacities than it ever has been. The Omaha Board of Education has a 21-year-old on that Board, elected by the people. There are a number of towns throughout this country that have mayors less than 20 years old. The process is now open to any who want to run for that office and again I think that we get caught up with the fact that this is a fashionable issue but I think if we're looking at this from a constitutional point of view, we're looking at this from simply a government point of view, the idea of imposing particular groups, classes into the elected constitutional offices is in my judgment a bad trend and away from the concepts of true representative democracy. The chance is there. Again you might note, just on the research we received from Joe Williams that the average age in this state is 28--I think that's what the statistic says--half the people in this country are under 25. The votes are there for young involvement in government. I think this Legislature this time around depicts that. My good friend, Senator Fowler, is 22 years old and has come through the elective process. My not-so-good friend, Senator Cavanaugh, is a couple of years older than that or 4 or 5. I said that in jest, of course. But I think the process is open now and I think that we're moving towards a bad precedent when we start making groups and classifications in elected government. And again I say that with a sincere interest in student participation in the process but this is not the way and this is not the place. So I would urge you not to put this bill on General File and support the actions of the committee.

PRESIDENT: Chair next recognizes Senator Anderson.

SENATOR ANDERSON: Mr. President, members of the Body, I rise in support of Senator Marvel's attempt to raise LB 323 to General File. As Senator Marvel has already indicated, the quality of testimony which the students gave for this bill at the hearing was something which I wish all of you could have heard. In the short three months that I have been in the Legislature, I think the quality of the testimony in terms of how these people addressed themselves to the real issue and how well organized this testimony was, this had to be the best testimony that I have heard so far. I think the basic issue here is whether we as the people who are setting the policy, or in this case asking the people of Nebraska to vote on policy regarding the governing of students, are going to jealousy continue to guard our present prerogative to tell students what kind of an education they're going to get or whether we're going to open up this process, add some