

PRESIDENT: Okay, Senator Schmit, then Senator Kremer, then Senator Goodrich, then Senator Stromer.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'd like to ask Senator Chambers a question please.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers, will you yield?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Yes, I will.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Senator Chambers, would this bill as it is written today preclude a law enforcement officer from being a member of a country club such as we have at David City where memberships are sold and which hold a liquor license?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Schmit, the intent of this bill is to prevent what was stated as a conflict of interests and that might be an issue to be resolved by the courts, but that is not what the bill is directed toward. There was a real situation in Omaha and I made the charge when there were drug investigations going on that there were police officers who owned interests in bars and taverns, immediately there was a denial by all of the officers on the force and the Chief of Police. The World Herald began to do some checking around and found at least some indications that there may be some bars owned by police officers and then they questioned the Chief about his initial denial. He said he had not denied that police officers have interests in bars and furthermore he didn't think they should be prevented from having interests in bars, although further on his discussion he said that a ruling by the Omaha Personnel Board prevented the Chief from placing certain restrictions over what police officers could do but if they had not cut into his authority he would not allow officers to have an interest in bars, he would not even have allowed them to work in these bars during their off hours so there was a contradiction within the article by the chief himself and this article was submitted to Senator Snyder's committee when these policemen came down to oppose the bill. There were some citizens who supported it by the way. The only opposition came from the Omaha Police Department where everybody had denied that there was any ownership or interest in bars.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Could I ask another question please? Would you have any objection, Senator Chambers, to an amendment which would allow membership to this type of organization?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: No, I wouldn't object to an amendment like that because it's not even designed to deal with that issue.

SENATOR SCHMIT: If I would prepare that amendment and offer it on Select File?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I would vote for it.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Fine, I'll do so. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Next to speak is Senator Kremer, Goodrich, Stromer, Whitney. It doesn't sound like we're going to resolve the question in a hurry. Senator Kremer.

SENATOR KREMER: Well, mine won't take very long. Basically I support the bill. The question that I had has been answered by Senator Chambers as asked by Senator Schmit. Basically I support the bill. I think this is right, I think Senator Chambers has stated the reason why it's good but my concern was that we have police officers, for example in my district, that have a membership in the country club and they were concerned that they would not be in violation just because they had the membership. So I would support an amendment that would clarify this particular issue.