

May 7, 1973

action today clarifies for the public exactly what the problem is and what this Legislature has decided to do about it. As I mentioned earlier I've suffered heavily on it because of misunderstanding. Even some of my fellow Senators in here, very good friends, have a times asked me, well, why did you ever introduce the dumb thing, why didn't we let it go this year, why did we have to deal with it? Well, as a legislator you and I are obligated to deal with these thorny problems and now I'm going to say something that I promised myself and I promised some others in here that I would say. I'm going to criticize some non-legislators who have been involved in some of the confusion. All of you have received tremendous pressure about adopting the Rhode Island bill. More than 10,000 brochures were sent out explaining in detail that LB 286 was a bill to permit abortion on demand. These were done by lobbyists, non-profit organizations who were using in effect tax exempt funds to do this. I have no objection to any individual in this state or in this country opposing or presenting their side of an issue. But when they use the veil of authority and then abuse it by lying about what is in a bill or what the effects of that bill are, they disgrace themselves not only with the people that they are representing, but they disgrace themselves with this body so that their future actions or future desires will probably be lightly regarded by this body because we mistrust them. I hope once and for all the issue is understood now that Nebraska has no law and that we are very sincerely trying to adopt a restrictive abortion bill and that we are trying to do the other thing as witnessed by the rejection of Senator Stahmer's amendment and that other thing is to set up a bona fide and legitimate court test in which the Supreme Court can review once again their decision in this entire area of abortion. Now why go at it this way? Why not use a constitutional amendment? Because there you're probably talking, 4, 5, 7 years before you get anywhere if you ever get anywhere and second, this is much more rapid and much more direct because it goes to the very courts that handed down the original decision. Senator Stahmer has stated that we can't do what I think we're about to do. He stated that most attorneys would say it's a bad bill. I think when the facts are all in, you'll find it is one of the most carefully drafted bills and it is legally sound and it will write new landmark legislation for the entire country before it's all said and done. When you vote, I would urge you to vote and to vote green for passage. I would remind you of what Dante about 6, 7, 800 years ago said. He said, the deepest places in hell are reserved for those people who in a time of moral crisis have all the courage to do absolutely nothing and if we did not act, that is exactly what we would be doing--nothing. For those 8,217 people who wrote me letters, a good portion of which said I was trying to butcher babies, I would tell them that I think I have as much respect for human life as any human being in this state. I have been married 8 years and there is nothing I want worse in this world than my own child but for one reason or another I have not been granted that privilege. I have raised 5 boys originally from Boys' Town. I think I'm probably as religious as any man in this room. I spent as some of you know about 4 years in a monastery studying to be a priest. So I think I have as much religion and as much respect for life as anybody else and I hope that the public will start to be informed as to what the real issue is here and what the real situation is. Fortunately, some news media have contributed very strongly to informing the public as to what the issue is. I would specifically cite the Omaha World Herald, the Lincoln papers, the True Voice which is the Catholic newspaper. They have informed the public. But to those who have deliberately followed a program of misinformation and deception as to what the bill is, as to what the situation is, I would offer my heartiest condemnation.

PRESIDENT: Senator Stahmer, if you have a question, you ask it of the chair. What is your question?