

March 13, 1974

Independents are not second to the largest in Nebraska but national wise. I noticed in this morning's paper, I think it was, that the Independents are around, I think in Douglas County, around 12,000. Now I may have read that a little wrong but anyhow there's a lot of them. Now all I'm trying to do in this amendment bit is that if the people do vote for this amendment, we can allow people to run as a Republican, people to run as a Democrat and people to run in the primary as an Independent if they so desire. And, if the people want to do it that way, I think they should be allowed to run that way. I don't think we should close the door in this Legislature and force a person to run as a Democrat or Republican. He may...he may be registered Independent and not want to belong to a party and we're precluding him from filing in...in the Primary according to this constitutional amendment as originally presented. I think this is wrong. I think it's full of holes in a court case. Just my personal opinion again and I think allowing the Legislature to have the leeway here of setting who the parties and also the Independents so they can all file would be the way out of a real dilemma. Now, this has been brought to my attention, come to my attention first on the Governor and Lieutenant Governor situation where we have barred the Independent from really filing other than by the petition method. I think the people that are registered non-partisan Independent have political rights to run for office. That's my reason for this amendment.

PRESIDENT: Senator Stromer wishes to speak on the amendment.

SENATOR STROMER: Yes. Mr. President, I have talked with Senator Syas before concerning this amendment. I think what his amendment will do is actually strengthen the bill and I think that perhaps if we would have let it go the other way, we would not have been able to make the, to allow for Independents to provide a spot on the ballot. I think that what we have seen, what Senator Syas has traced for you, some of the history, I think is true and I think we might be inviting some trouble if we do not change it. And so I have conversed with him before about this and I think it will strengthen the bill.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I'm opposed to the amendment. I will vote against it. I mean I will vote against the bill even as amended. I do not think that there is any virtue in requiring partisan election...election of Unicameral members. I've heard and read in the newspapers that there is more discipline in a partisan body and all these other things. Yet, where there is partisan election at the national level with the U. S. Senate and the U. S. House of Representatives, I fail to see the discipline in either body that is so highly extolled. I see Watergate having occurred because of the blatant partisanship which does occur now in elections. It becomes a fight between political parties anytime there is an election and not the selection of the best people capable of administering a government in the interests of the people. So I think it's a situation where the political parties are looking out for their own preservation which I can understand. I think the existence of political parties encourages corruption because a party takes away individual responsibility for actions plays. An individual who is an official in that party can blame it on a committee. The chairman of that committee can blame it on members who are not controlled and who are somewhat unruly. It winds up with a situation where everybody