

April 6, 1979

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PRESIDENT LUEDTKE: The Chair recognizes Senator Rumery.

SENATOR RUMERY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, during the time I was receiving my baptismal fire in this body in 1975 one of the first things I had placed in my lap was the futile effort that we went through for many days of trying to ratify the constitutional amendment on ERA. I opposed the constitutional amendment. I didn't think it was good to tamper with the Constitution, and I said at the time, I told Senator Marsh...she may not remember it, but I told her and other proponents that if there were discriminations against women that could be changed in law I would be happy to look at them and probably give them support. I had one constituent who accused me of hating women because I opposed the ERA. I assured her that I didn't hate women. I have five in my own family and I love every one of them, and I think here is an opportunity for us to take care of something in the law without attempting to tamper with the constitution. Therefore, I'm happy to support this bill, and I hope the rest of you will too.

PRESIDENT LUEDTKE: Alright, any further discussions?
Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. President and members of this body, I rise in support of the bill. I think what Senator Marsh is doing is a very admirable task. Language, as you know, is a matter of custom and usage, and the kind of usage that we make of our individual language is a product of our upbringing and a product of our environment, and a product of the words that we have heard used years in and years out. Now for us to begin to neuter our language will take many, many, many years. But one place we do begin neutering our language, so we don't exclude half of humankind, is with our statutes. It's our law. I think that what Senator Marsh is doing is an admirable task. One thing my church is doing, for example, is it is attempting to neuter some of the common expressions that we use in churches. For example, the brotherhood of man...very common acception, very common phrase that we use in churches, translates into the fellowship of humankind, a more neutral meaning, which doesn't always exclude women. Now as a man it's easy for me to accept that kind of language, and that kind of phraseology, because that's what I've grown up in. That's what I've heard. Probably it's easy for women too, because that's what they have heard as well. On the other hand, as we begin to neuter our language, our daughters and our sisters, and our daughters' daughters, and our sisters' daughters, and our sons as well, will begin to realize that