

April 6, 1979

LB 395

Section 1. I remind the body that this is language that Senator Wesely is primarily responsible for, and I will yield to him although I support the intent of the bill. Senator Wesely.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I want to thank Senator Landis and Senator Fowler for helping me out by including Section 1 in LB 395. It deals particularly with a problem that I found in my district and which upon examination I think is shared by other parts of the city of Lincoln that I know of from experience and I think throughout the state. That basically is when an individual tries to cross a street, whether it be a two-lane residential street or a four-lane arterial, the car does not respect the right of the pedestrian to cross that street. That isn't always the case, but it happens too often that we have accidents or near accidents where individuals are merely trying to cross the street, old and young, or in between, and they have difficulty getting across the street, because as the present law reads it merely states that when you're in the lane of traffic of a car that car has to yield for you by slowing down or stopping, which seems rather reasonable, but that's only if you're in front of the car basically. It also states that if you're approaching a car so closely as to be endangered, then the car has to stop. Well that's reasonable too, but I think we need to take the next step, because I don't think the car necessarily has to be king in this state. I think pedestrian safety is most important. I think looking out for the safety of our children and our older people and everybody who tries to cross the street ought to be of primary importance. This bill merely changes and clarifies the fact that when a pedestrian tries to cross the street in a crosswalk, he ought to be allowed to cross that street and a car ought to stop and let him pass, and that's basically all that the bill does, all that the bill tries to clarify. It's a major change, but I think it's a very good change and one that I think we need in this state. I'll be happy to answer any questions, and I urge your support for both the striking of Section 2, because Lincoln has dealt with that problem, and your support for Section 1.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Venditte.

SENATOR VENDITTE: Well, Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I rise in objection to the striking of Section 2,