

May 1, 1979

LB 152

Omaha. I had that amendment up there. Since Senator Venditte isn't here I don't think I'll take it up. Maybe Senator Venditte can hook it somewhere else. Senator Fowler brought up the fact that maybe we could take some language out of LB 87, the small loan bill on debt collection, but I don't think we want to do that either. I move that the bill be advanced.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Hoagland, your light is on, and Senator Newell, your light is on. Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: I'd like to rise, Mr. Speaker, in opposition to this bill. I really can't understand why this bill is before the Legislature, and I really can't see what purpose is served by softening the gambling statutes in the State of Nebraska. Now I know I'm not particularly interested in seeing this bill pass. What this bill does is take away all felonies, all felonies for gambling except the one that Senator DeCamp has just now reinstated. Now I don't think anybody in my district is interested in having this particular bill passed, and I'm really surprised and I'm really shocked that we should even be considering passage of a bill of this sort. Now I think gambling per se is bad. I think the State of Nebraska for many years has made a societal judgment that there is really no point in fostering big time gambling or even small time gambling. Now granted there are exceptions to that. There are exceptions at the racetrack at Aksarben, and there are exceptions at a lot of the big time Bingo games around Omaha, and I'm not sure I agree with those exceptions. I don't see what public purpose is to be served by that. But more important, colleagues, I think we've got to understand that when you have gambling and when you open up the gambling laws, and when you make it easier for gambling to take place particularly in large communities like Omaha and Lincoln, why you're inviting organized crime to come in, and I think when the most severe penalties that we're going to attach to virtually any kind of gambling around the state is a misdemeanor penalty...is a misdemeanor penalty, why you're going to be inviting all kinds of organized gambling, you know, organized crime people to come into Nebraska, which is largely free of organized crime, and engage in these kinds of activities. I think we know from statements of law enforcement officers that were made that we're going to hamper the involvement of federal officials in dealing with gambling problems around the state, because federal laws for enforcement take a felony offense for federal participation to kick in. Now I know that Senator DeCamp