

May 21, 1979

LB 329

SENATOR VENDITTE: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the Pirsch motion to return the bill to Select File. I have to agree with what Senator Chambers has said, and I think there would be adequate representation with the number that is now addressed in the bill. I believe that Senator Pirsch has also indicated that her objections as to why she feels the bill is improperly put together at this point, and I think she had mentioned the figure as twenty-eight percent increase. Well you have to keep in mind, gentlemen and ladies, that what they are getting in the city of Omaha is I believe about fifty percent more than what we're getting, and that's not very much money. So the twenty-eight percent additional increase as far as a burden to the taxpayers of the community and the City of Omaha I think is almost so miniscule, I don't think that can even enter into the argument here, and I think, yes, I think it's a valid point too that the members, the people of the city have turned down district elections on a number of occasions, but I guess to address myself to a second point that Senator Pirsch has indicated that it would create additional cost of additional staff. I don't believe that the members of the city council have staff right now. I think they're all utilizing one or two secretaries. So if we see an additional staff member involved here, I think the amount would be so minute that again I don't think the cost could enter into the debate here in this issue. I would hope that you would reject this particular motion to return the bill to add that particular amendment. We need...we need representation on the Omaha city council, and we need more representation than what we have now. I would say the majority of the people living in the City of Omaha probably don't feel comfortable going up to a city councilman right now, talking to them about a particular problem and why, well primarily because they don't know them. I think what has happened in the City of Omaha as far as district election of our school board members has created a great deal of interaction within the community between parents and members of the school board, and I think the same kind of interaction, the same kind of communication can exist if people can elect people that they know. Most of the time when members, when people in the City of Omaha go to the booth to elect members of the city council, they don't know who they're voting for. They have no idea who they're voting for. They're voting for a name...a name that they have heard on the news, a name that they have read in the newspaper, and I would think that this would certainly be a step in the right direction, and I would certainly hope that we would