

May 22, 1979

Now let me explain why. This year we met all or parts of twenty-two weeks. Now only eleven of those twenty-two weeks did we meet everyday. Now you translate that to a sixty day session it means from eleven you drop it down to six or seven days we are going to have to pick up at the end of the session. With Jerry Koch's amendment we are talking about three or four extra days so we are really only talking about one more trip back home. I think that with all of the other considerations involved, why lets give it a try with the understanding that it is that minimal a change. Now let me make one final point. This is a \$4,800 a year job. Everybody views it as a part time job. My constituents view it as a part time job. Now, that means that I take home \$302.00 a month. Now, I think if we are really going to open up the legislature to representation from urban people who have got to raise a family, who have got to make a living, who don't have a retirement income, who don't have a pension and I know that all of us are making sacrifices, but the sacrifices fall particularly hard on the people in their 30's and 40's. We have got to be able to maintain a business. We have got to be able to maintain a living or we are not going to be able to serve down here. Now a lot of us kind of recklessly decided to run for office, understanding what problems these are going to create, and we are paying for it. It cost us a lot in terms of lost practice in terms of lost income and it is something that we are not going to be able to sustain for a very long period of time. But don't think so much about us. Think about the people in Omaha and Lincoln that are professionals and have got to have five day a week jobs, who maybe could spread it over a three day week end during a session if they really work hard enough at it, who were chilled from running for office because they don't think they can afford it, they know that they can't afford it. They take home \$300 a month they have two or three kids to support, if we are down here meeting five days a week for three or four months out of the year we are guaranteeing those people will never have an opportunity to run and never have an opportunity to serve. I think that if we want to make this to be a Legislature that is open to all economic classes and people of all age groups and people who are working as well as retiring, and people that are poor as well as medium income and independently wealthy, well we have got to seriously think about these types of changes. Now the Oklahoma Legislature meets three days a week. There are lots of other rural Legislatures that don't have these kind of constrictions on people that have to make a living. So I really urge you to vote in favor of this. Keeping in mind the fact that we are only talking about extending the session three or four days