

lation so I yield to Senator Newell to continue.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Newell.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, members of the body, the committee amendments to 483 are basically some amendments that were worked out during the course of debate on this issue. This was a heavily debated issue. It is not a simple issue by any stretch of the imagination but basically the provisions do a number of things. The attempt here is to try to, as the bill was originally written, it talked about adoptions and the original section that came under great flak and great contention was the provision that said that majority...that once a person reached the age of majority, which in the State of Nebraska is nineteen, that they could then ask to open up their adoption records and proceed with a search or a parent could, the biological parent could open up the adoption records and proceed with a search. So one of the major provisions here since the age nineteen was hotly debated and the question really was whether or not nineteen was the appropriate level of maturity and in fact that the request to open up many of these adoption records were naught by nineteen year olds. In fact very few nineteen year olds were interested, because at nineteen, you tend to be more interested in college and other things than you are in terms of really finding out your own historical and biological roots, that most of the people that were requesting this kind of change were in fact twenty-five years old and older, people who had children of their own, that desired to know who they were, who their biological parents were and so, consequently, it satisfied a number of groups, interested people in this group to raise that from nineteen to twenty-five. Now it tended to satisfy the parents of adopted children more than it did those people who were wishing to open up the adoption records but I think everyone, there is general agreement on the age of twenty-five at this point because simply there is an understanding of the need to compromise, I guess is the word that I am looking for. Another provision that is in the committee amendments deals with trying to balance the rights of all the parties concerned, the adopted person, the adoptive parents and the siblings. One of the provisions in the bill and in the committee amendments which rewrite the bill allows for children not to be separated. If you have a two year old and an infant, right now they can be separated, and the bill just changes the emphasis there and says that siblings should not be separated unless it is in their best interest. And what that simply does is simply this, and this is almost uncontroversial. In fact, I have not heard any problem with this