

January 29, 1980

LB 525

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, and members of the Legislature, Senator Sieck, I wonder if you would yield to a question.

SENATOR SIECK: Yes, Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Senator Sieck, I wonder if you could tell myself and the members of the Legislature why you introduced this bill, what your personal motivation for introducing this bill is and why you believe it is so important to the people of the State of Nebraska.

SENATOR SIECK: It really is a personal feeling and a tender spot in my heart for these type of people. My son lived in a group home for the mental retarded here in Lincoln. The atmosphere was much like that of a family. The supervision was close and positive. The home was an asset to this community. The only problem with it was that there were too many group homes in that community and there were other group homes, such as, halfway houses for drugs, mental health and correctional institutions. I feel that these should be further from them and that was one of the basic reasons for me to support this. My son has graduated from the group homes. He now lives in an apartment and the apartments have nothing to do with group homes. Now 525 takes the group home that my son lived in and allows it to be located in a residential zone. Now let me make it clear what LB 525 provides. First, Section 1 of LB 525 defines a group home for the purpose of this act as serving no more than eight people who are developmentally disabled. That includes cerebral palsy, autism and mental retardation. Now such homes are licensed and annually surveyed by the State Department of Health and Division of Standards, under the provisions of Rule 27, centers for the developmentally disabled. As a result, such group homes are required to have high levels of staff supervision and closely resemble a family. As a matter of fact, they have far more supervision than most families. So let's be clear, LB 525 does not include large group homes or group homes that serve the persons coming from the penal complex, the juvenile offender, the mentally ill or the drug abuser. Second, LB 525 said a small number of group homes as defined may be located in any residential zone. Section 4 sets limits on the number of group homes per municipality that will benefit from the provisions of this bill. I want to make it clear that the approach is a compromise agreed upon by the Nebraska League of Municipalities.