

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I was about to move to adjourn, however, in deference to the Speaker, let me just continue on to make a statement that what we are doing with LR 30 is agreeing to do nothing, and that seems to me to be a task that has only a symbolic quality and since we are called upon so oftentimes to do measures of substance, works of real progress in the lives of Nebraskans, it seems to me a shame to waste our valuable time as a Legislature in an agreement to do nothing. I would simply suggest two things. Number one, we ought to save this fight on this issue when we have before us a meaningful bill, when we have an affirmatively phrased call to recognize the D.C. amendment. Until that time, this issue is premature. However, even though it is premature it does not mean that we can overlook the human and real values that are at play here. Those of us who oppose the ideas inherent in the arguments in favor of LR 30 have to stand and oppose them at every turn because we can't allow the hidden agenda, which I think really is behind LR 30, to go unchallenged. What do I mean by hidden agenda? Let me say that I think it is true that the characteristics of the people of Washington D.C. that provides the greatest stumbling block to the recognition of their political rights. It is not that the Constitution creates an enclave different than a state. It is not that they haven't filed for and received statehood. It is a set of characteristics that they share, and some of those characteristics are more important to certain critics of the D.C. amendment than others. Perhaps some are distressed because they are poor. Perhaps some are distressed as Senator Chambers suggests because they are black. Perhaps some are upset because they are government related. We have certainly heard that on the floor. We must also confess that perhaps we are upset because they may be liberal, they be the kind of an electorate to send two liberal senators to the U.S. Senate, and that is the kind of issue that I have heard repeatedly off the floor being suggested by members of this Legislature and also constituents who support LR 30, that what we don't need in the U.S. Senate are more liberals. Well, perhaps I can agree to the idea that we need a better balance between conservatives and liberals. That certainly is a question that we can all acknowledge and weigh and argue and tip a few over if we wish. That is not, however, the most basic decision in determining political rights. Rights should not be doled out to people based on whether or not they are going to have your political persuasion or not. They should be doled out because of a locus of rights that an individual shares. That locus of rights is inherent in our political tradition, in our democracy and in the very instruments that Senator Chambers mentioned, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution,