

March 6, 1980

LB 974

bring this out of committee. Now let me emphasize that this is not a major bill and this is sort of like introducing a new bill to have 30 votes to bring it out of committee so we can bring it here on the floor to talk about, but this bill is a symbolically important bill. Now let me explain its contents and I think you will understand why I feel that way. Now this particular bill as amended and as shown on page 999 of the Journal, would limit to \$5,000 the amount that any legislative candidate could accept in campaign contributions from all corporations, unions, associations and political action committees. Now this bill, if passed, will go into effect after the coming elections, so it would not be applicable until the 1982 elections, and judging from the financing of the 1978 legislative races it would have a limited impact. It would actually change the financing of only four or five races as they were conducted in 1978, but what we are worried about is the growth of special interest spending and the need to protect legislative races in future years. Now this bill does two things. Number one, it protects all legislative candidates including incumbents in the future from becoming too dependent upon corporate, union and political action committee contributions. It protects candidates from becoming too dependent on those kinds of contributions. Secondly and more important, it sends a message to the people in the State of Nebraska that candidates for the Legislature are going to seek to raise funds from individuals. They are going to seek to raise funds in the form of individual contributions and not special interest contributions, not special interest contributions in the form of large chunk money contributions from unions, from corporations and from political action committees. Now why is this necessary? First of all we are perceived by the public generally, and I think we all understand this, we are perceived by the public generally as being too susceptible in this body to special interest influence. I know I get telephone calls from the people in my legislative district and they ask questions like, why did the Legislature ever pass that bill exempting business inventories from the tax rolls. Or they ask questions like, why is there a sales tax on utilities for homeowners while there is no sales tax on utilities for businesses. Now we get questions like this and I think as a result of those kinds of provisions we are perceived out there generally by the public as being too susceptible to public interest influence and this bill, this relatively small bill, is an opportunity for us in this election year to do something about that perception. Now why else is this bill necessary? Well it is also necessary if you take a look

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