

and adjust to the prevailing attitude in that area. As originally introduced the model Drug Paraphernalia Act included a wide variety of equipment and materials within its definition. The committee determined that several aspects of the definitional sections could be removed without inhibiting the original intent of this bill. At this point I feel it is necessary to discuss the intent behind 991. There is a large and growing number of people who use drugs more frequently and they are a higher potency than ever before. The most alarming thing is that this growth of illegal drug use is not with the adults but rather with our children. Studies indicate that the fastest growing group of drug users is the group from eight years of age to fourteen years of age. Addressing this issue is a legitimate power of the Legislature and one that I feel is very necessary at this point. Rapid growth of drug use by younger people is a trend which must be reversed. LB 991 is far from a cure-all for all these problems. It is only one step but it is a step we should take. Present legal commercialization of illegal drug use should not be tolerated by this body. Commercialization is aimed not only at the adults who, right or wrong, make a decision about drug use but it is also aimed at the youth of our state. Head shops have begun to appear across the state. One of these appeared in Scottsbluff about a year ago. These shops commercialize and glamorize products which have little other use besides use with legal...illegal drugs. Head shops create a paradox in the minds of our youngsters with their message that drug paraphernalia is legal and that drug use itself can be fun. We cannot allow this message that drugs are okay continue to be spread to our young people. LB 991 will remove these head shops from a place of prominence in our communities. Removal of these commercial outlets will in a small way remove a certain enticement and glamorization of drugs from our children. This is the intent of 991. We will not eliminate drug paraphernalia but we will remove the paraphernalia from the easy access of youngsters and hopefully prevent drug use by removing the enticement of drug paraphernalia. The second aspect of the committee amendments reduce the penalty for possession of drug paraphernalia to an infraction. At the committee hearing several people testified that creating a criminal classification for young people who possess drug paraphernalia may be as harmful to them as allowing use to continue. Therefore, the committee determined that removing the criminal misdemeanor penalty and reducing this to an infraction will, in effect, allow for effective enforcement of the law while removing any criminal stigma which may be attached to possession of