

April 14, 1980

LB 993

CLERK: Mr. President, the amendment is on page 1480 of the Journal. It reads as follows: Read.

SENATOR KELLY: Mr. Speaker, members of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, I offer this amendment in opposition to the committee's procedures after a year and a half investigation regarding what I refer to as the Joe Soukup case which all of you have followed I know in the press and the electronic media, but to cap this off, I distributed to each member of the Legislature this morning a synopsis of the Joe Soukup history starting back in 1953 following up through 1969. It would not be my intention now to reiterate that litany of wrongs done to its citizen, Joe Soukup, by the State of Nebraska but I would point out that while Joe Soukup was at the Lincoln Regional Center he received twenty-five, he received twenty-five electroshock treatments and evidently, and evidently these were received for epilepsy which he did not have. Now there are those who say Joe Soukup was not damaged. I have never had an electroshock treatment but I have seen motion pictures of people who are receiving them and I am telling you that is treatment above and beyond duty and was administered by the State of Nebraska in compassion, I guess. Also Joe Soukup had his feet damaged by the institutions in Nebraska. This young man wears, now listen, a size seventeen shoe. So badly were his feet damaged that Joe could hardly walk and not for over thirty minutes at a time, but in compassion the Labor Committee did through ordering surgery and physical investigation of Joe correct the physical problem with his feet and he can walk for miles now and happy as a lark with this improvement in his life and I am asking for just a little bit more improvement in his life, namely, to help Joe get an education which he does not have, although we have it in our state law that the wards of the court which Joe would be would be educated and it didn't happen with Joe. To help him with his social balance and his emotional maturity, we need further help for Joe. A precedent setting question and the committee did not want to set a precedent. Now please understand, members of the committee, and it is Business and Labor Committee, that when you have a question asked of you that is a precedent setting question, there is no way that you can dodge the precedent. You didn't create it and you can't do away with it. The institutions in the State of Nebraska and their mistreatment and their malpractice on Joe Soukup created the precedent and the Business and Labor Committee set a precedent in their answer by just saying, get out of the way, Joe, we will have no part of you. That is the precedent that is now