

April 14, 1980

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senators that have not supported this issue and I hope that when they go back into their districts they will be able to explain why they were denying the right to vote on the issue. The question is whether Omaha voters have a right under the home rule charter by which they can decide for themselves whether we should have district elections or not. Now as I told Senator Chambers in the hearing, I am not opposed to district elections but I am opposed when the Legislature mandates and takes away the right for the people of Omaha to vote. When the Omaha home rule charter was drafted in about 1956 the right of Omahans to select that method was not questioned. Later on there was groups that decided that we should have district elections. In order to be fair three times we have put the issue on the ballot. Now there is a trend, it is changing, there are many people now in Omaha I know that will vote for district elections. If that is true, then the Omaha senators should not be so reluctant to vote to give the Omahans a chance to decide for themselves whether or not we should have district elections in Omaha. I urge you to suspend the rules and allow us to talk and convince you that Omaha will have it on the ballot in November and that we will have a chance to vote on it. I passed out an editorial that was put in the newspaper I think three or four days ago. I would like to read the last paragraph. "The mandating by the Legislature of the procedures by which officials who run local government are selected is clearly an interference in local affairs. If allowed to stand, it will erode the principle of home rule in Nebraska, a principle which historically has been one of the keystones of the American system. It is still not too late for the Legislature to recognize this and give Omahans back the right to govern themselves locally." I urge you to suspend the rules so that we may get down to the issue of whether or not we will repeal LB 329 that was adopted so hurriedly last year after lunch after it was once defeated in the morning. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I will be very, very brief. I have talked to a number of you already and stated my position on the issue, but just so the record will be clear that I am opposed to their motion to suspend the rules, I am speaking at this time. Consistent with what has happened during earlier parts of today, I think that Senator Labeledz and Senator DeCamp's motion ought to be defeated. They have had more shots at this than anybody has had at any other issue before

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