

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President, I handed out an explanation of the amendment and it probably would be as quick to read it to you. "The purpose of the amendment is to modify width requirements of intracity buses traveling on state highways." That is a bus that goes around within a city but there are state highways going through cities so intracity buses do travel on state highways. Currently an intercity bus that travels on a state highway can be a hundred and two inches wide plus safety equipment. This amendment would allow intracity buses, would change the intracity bus requirement to equal the intercity bus requirement. So buses traveling within a city on a state highway can be the same width as buses traveling between cities and the reason for this amendment is that the City of Lincoln is currently contemplating purchasing, in fact, is I think in the process of purchasing new intracity buses that are a hundred and two inches wide and the existing buses are ninety-six. Now what this would do is on main thoroughfares in the City of Lincoln that are state highways, that a bus that belongs to Lincoln Transportation system or in the case of Omaha, Metro Area Transit, or any other transit system if it travels around within the city, it would, on a state highway it could be the same width as a bus that travels between cities that is traveling on a state highway. So it really does not change the width requirement, maximum width requirement that is allowable. It just allows the bus that travels within the city to be the same width as the bus that travels between cities. Lincoln is asking for an additional six inches on this bus width. So with that I would move for adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Beutler, do you want to talk on this amendment?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, in the Public Works Committee every year we have long and tedious debates on the effects of additional width with regard to the size of the road and the safety of the road and when you get wider vehicles then the road becomes unsafe and you build bigger highways and they get heavier. And the heavier they get they crumble the highways and cost you a whole bunch of money in the long run. This is a very dangerous type of amendment. The one that Senator Lamb proposed to you is a dangerous type of amendment. It is not a wise thing to do to start allowing wider vehicles and heavier vehicles onto our roads without a thorough discussion in committee on what the effect of those exemptions might be and I just warn you that this is something that is easy to do and difficult to see the implications of but it has sometimes very serious consequences in terms of the cost in the long run in building or repairing our highways, in terms of safety,