

March 10, 1982

LB 679

right that they have for visitation to see their grandchildren and there isn't any secondary opportunity, indirect way in which they can provide for those visitation rights. So in this case we're talking about a very particular situation that I believe deserves attention by this Legislature and should be passed. The bill before you, LB 679, is not a priority bill so it will not be considered this session once it is brought out of committee and I hope you will bring it out of committee. What I'd like to see as I discuss this and I know many of you are not paying too much attention to the discussion but for those of you who are, what I want to know is whether or not there is an interest in even pursuing the concept of giving grandparents the right to visit their grandchildren in the case that we're talking about where their daughter or son has died. It seems to me that there is that right that should be established and that it is only reasonable that we provide that right to these grandparents. But as I told you the bill has been killed twice before. It was killed in committee this year and it seems pretty clear that this Nebraska Legislature does not want to deal with that issue. Now let me tell you that I got a call from Boston just about a week ago and it was from Gannett Knight-Ridder who contacted me and wanted to know why Nebraska was one of the only nine states that did not provide for some visitation rights for grandparents. He was doing a national story about the fact that there are so few states that had recognized the fact that in certain circumstances grandparents should have the right to visit their grandchildren when they are being denied that opportunity and as I said this is a very limited application. And I explained to him the history that I just explained to you and the fact that it hadn't got very far and he was dumbfounded by it because in other states they do have this right. It has worked, it has been a benefit and he could not understand why we hadn't seen the light yet here. And evidently in other states where they do have this right it is much broader than what we are talking about here. Not only do they provide it for the case where the one spouse has died, they provide it in cases of divorce and they provide it even in cases where there isn't divorce and there is a conflict between the parents and the grandparents. I don't want to go that far and I don't think we should go that far. I'm talking about a very particular case that I think has merit that we ought to consider and I want to get a sense from this Legislature as to whether or not you're concerned about the right of grandparents to visit their grandchildren or not. I think that after three attempts, if we aren't able to pull this bill out of committee and if there isn't an indication of support, it seems pretty clear to me that this Legislature does not want to pursue the issue any further and I would be very disappointed in that. But I do think you ought to be familiar with the issue by now after three years of it and would ask you very strongly to

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