

March 19, 1982

LB 573

PRESIDENT: A Wesely-Kremer amendment. What page is that on?

CLERK: 1099.

PRESIDENT: 1099 of the Journal, all right. Chair recognizes Senator Wesely. Are you going to speak to the amendment?

SENATOR WESELY: Yes. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this amendment is brought to you by Senator Kremer and I after it was called to our attention several weeks ago when the bill was up on General File but rather than take the time at that point to discuss it we thought we would wait until Select File. Whether you know it or not the present statutes read that you have to be between the ages of 30 and 68 in order to serve on the Public Service Commission in the State of Nebraska. I hadn't realized that until about two years ago when I was contacted by some individuals who were under the age of 30 and interested in running for the Public Service Commission, however, the law precluded them from that opportunity. I also heard from individuals who were over the age of 68 who wanted to run for the Public Service Commission and were too old to run under the statutes as presently constituted. So I got to thinking about it over the last couple of years and I kind of waited for the right opportunity and it seemed to appear this session to raise the question about whether or not it made any sense to have that provision in the law. I understand the background, I hadn't realized it before that there were some concerns years ago when those guidelines were originally adopted and perhaps there was some legitimate concern at that point. I can't speak to that issue. All I can talk about is that in 1982 looking at the different offices that this state offers individuals to serve in you find very few that have this sort of restrictions on their age that the Public Service Commission has. One example is the Legislature and this Legislature if you are 21 years of age or older you can run for office. Now it seems to me that you have had individuals who have been elected, a number of them, under the age of 30 and you have individuals who are over the age of 68 serving in this body and I think they are doing a good job. I don't think that the age factors is the real illuminating light, so to speak, as to whether somebody will be a good legislator or not. More important factors are involved, an individual's personality and the background and abilities and what have you. Age is one factor but it is not the predominant factor. Yet, with the Public Service Commission figures between the ages of 30 and 68 being the only ones in which you can run for that office or serve on the Public Service Commission, you