

January 8, 1986

not an excellent Legislature already. It is an excellent Legislature. By all standards, by all national comparisons that have been taken from time to time our Legislature always rates very, very high. We don't have continuing corruption. We don't have that pattern. We don't have a pattern of venal behavior. We have a very good pattern of behavior in this particular body. But we are still not highly thought of in terms of the public and there are a number of reasons for that, but I think some of the reasons relate to some of the items in this particular code of conduct and I think that if we can address some of those items, that our credibility in the public eye will go up measurably. Our credibility in the public eye has recently gone down measurably. From time to time when polls are taken, the Legislature, it's usually about 49 or 50 percent give us a passing grade and the rest say we fail. This last time when a poll was taken our passing grade was down around 40 percent rather than up around 50 percent. So for one reason or another we continue to suffer from serious credibility problems. We do have the Political Accountability and Disclosure Act and that imposes a standard upon us already in a number of ways. But what I am asking you to consider today is the adoption of some new standards, standards that would enable us to go back to our public here in Nebraska and say, we abide by the best set of standards in the country; nobody, nobody does more than we do to try to keep our operation clean and independent. I think that the timing for this is perfect and I think that when you look and start thinking about the provisions of this code that it will not seem very radical to you at all. And as we go through them one by one, I hope you will look at them in as objective a light as you can and really examine whether they are radical or not. I think they are very reasonable and very modest. To highlight the proposal which should be on your desk right now, it contains eight or nine major provisions and I have also passed out to you the rules of the U.S. House of Representatives. This code that we are considering today is based largely upon the code already adopted and has been in effect for some time in the U.S. House of Representatives. So, obviously, the provisions are not radical in any respect. They are already in use in this country, a number of them. Of course, they have been adopted, of course, to our local conditions and some additional provisions have been added. But the seven or eight major provisions include a limitation on the number of free meals that may be provided by lobbyists. It