

January 9, 1986

Carsten.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. It isn't easy standing up here and following the man of the year, especially when you are going to disagree with him. I think this rule has some merit, if for no other reason why not give it a try. It is voluntary. I serve on the Urban Affairs Committee. I serve on the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and Miscellaneous Subjects. Now, if any one of those committees would say, why don't we have a budget hearing on a particular project or a particular agency that usually falls within the jurisdiction of one of those committees, then I see no problem with it so long as the committee members, you know, say, well, yes, I am willing to serve on that budget committee, I would like to know more about this. The Education Committee, they may want to know a little bit more about budgets of some of our different schools. The Urban Affairs Committee might say, you know, before we think too much about cutting the budget of this city, the primary cities, first class city or a metropolitan class city, why don't we call them in for a little budget hearing? Schedule it in the evening or schedule it during the lunch hour. Not all of us gets the opportunity to serve on the Appropriations Committee. I had the opportunity and said, well, I don't want to work that hard. But I think it would be a good experience for those of us who have never and probably will never serve on the Appropriations Committee to really dig deep and find out, where is the money being spent? I know the Appropriations Committee does a good job but I have to say that every time we come up with a budget you work through two books going back to see what this program is and then how much is funded and how successful it is, whereas those of us who have a particular program's proponent coming before us, we know more about that program than the Appropriations Committee that sits on no other committee but that one. So when it comes to cutting the budget for the cities or for education, the Education Committee would not only have the knowledge of the educational problems within cities and towns but if they so chose, they could look at the budgets, for instance the Education Committee might want to look at the budget of our Omaha public school system and decide, you know, gee whiz, they spend quite a bit of money, how do they spend it? I don't think our Appropriations Committee has the time to look at the Omaha public schools' budget, the Lincoln public schools' budget, and all the others. But, to me, what is