

January 10, 1986

are amending some of the existing language in the rules by taking out the words "at the expense of such absent member." Is that correct?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Right.

SENATOR VICKERS: So that the rule then would say that any member who has been excused, "including a member who has been excused...may be compelled, if necessary," and so forth as the membership may authorize, "unless such excuse for nonattendance is made as the Legislature may judge sufficient." I'm not sure exactly what that means in this context. I suggest maybe that should be taken out, too. In other words, your intention at least is to set it up so that anybody that is brought back, the money would be paid for out of the contingent fund and not by the individual member. Is that correct?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR VICKERS: Okay, thank you, Senator Higgins. I have some real problems with that and I think Senator Higgins made a good argument against taking this language out when she was mentioning about a member who was attending to personal business while the rest of us were down here meeting. It seems to me that if I excuse myself and go back home for some personal business, or some work that I feel like I need to do, or a speech that I want to make before some group, that I had ought to be held somewhat responsible if the body decides that, no, this excuse is not good enough, the reason I'm gone is not good enough, that the contingency fund should pay for my expense to come back. Now if I'm gone to, as I was during the last special session, if I'm gone to a national meeting representing the State of Nebraska, which I was at that point, then I would guess that generally speaking this body would say, yes, that is a good reason to be gone and, yes, we are going to pay the expense to bring him back, if in fact they are going to require me to come back because I'm representing the body. But if I'm out someplace on my own time, doing my own thing, making my own...hopefully making some money which I guess I couldn't do if I went back home right now, but if that is what I was doing, I don't know why the public funds should pay to bring me back. It seems to me I ought to pay for it myself. So I would urge you to reject Senator Higgins's amendment to the existing rules.