

SENATOR SCHMIT: Senator Warner, there have been many...many complaints have been alleged that the PSC is too slow in their reaction. Do you recall that the industry, in the years that you've been Appropriation Chairman, has the industry ever come before the Appropriations Committee and requested additional staff, additional support staff for the Public Service Commission so that they could better facilitate the requests for rate increases?

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Schmit, I do not specifically recall that they have. I don't want to say they never have because that is possible. But I...

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR WARNER: It would be accurate to say that that would not be a general thing that occurs annually at appropriation hearings. That certainly is accurate.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you very much, Senator Warner. I want to just conclude by saying this, we have been told that the Public Service Commission acts too slowly. We've been told that it takes too long. My amendment provides for implementation of 90 percent of the rate increase within approximately 60 days of the time you request the application, with a refund provision if it is not all granted. I would suggest that under this situation the PSC will be better able to provide service. They will have the staff they need to act upon these rate increases, and I think that will be in the interest of the company, most of all it will be in the interest of the public. In conclusion, I want to just say once again to Senator Higgins I believe that the passage of LB 835, as proposed by Senator DeCamp, would be a disservice to the elderly, to the handicapped, to the rural people, and to all the small towns, and in fact to the residents of most communities, and in fact to the business of most communities.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time. Senator DeCamp is next, but may I introduce some guests of Senator Beyer, please. In the north balcony we have 60 fourth grade students from Gretna, accompanied by their teachers. Would you folks please rise and be recognized by your Legislature. Thank you. Senator DeCamp, please. Then Senator Abboud.