

February 19, 1991

would not have been altered. Only in Gage County that this statute becomes so important unfortunately, but that is water under the bridge. It happened and now it is up to us to decide what to do about the election contest which is before us. Everyone in this body, including Senator Byars, has sworn to an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and also the Constitution of our State of Nebraska. The State Constitution says that this body is a judge of our election and returns, and that is why we have the question before us to determine who is to be seated for the 30th Legislative District. The majority of Exec Board states that we need to follow the law. It is, after all, the law of the state, and we could be criticized as hypocrites if we do not even follow our own laws, that is the laws which this body has duly passed into law. It is hard not to agree with that. It is hard not to agree to that logic. If we passed the law, we ought to be bold enough to uphold it. But in this case, I feel...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR HEFNER: ...we have a higher calling. All of our actions are governed by a higher authority and this is our State Constitution. In Article I, Section 22, it states, "All elections shall be free; and there shall be no hindrance or impediment to the right of a qualified voter to exercise the elective franchise." It makes no difference what our law says, if the Constitution requires a different response, and I feel it does require a different response here. We do not have the...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR HEFNER: ...authority to declare any statutes as unconstitutional. Did you say my time was up? Okay. I have a lot more material here. I'd appreciate if somebody else would give me part of their time. I will also push my light on again so I can talk again. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hefner. We will now go to Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President and members, I punched my light on early because I wanted to get in ahead of some of the lawyer types that may discuss this issue, and I would just like to key in on two phrases that I think are key in this situation. And one is the phrase that we have all heard, substantial