

QUOTES

From the floor

Senators were candid as they debated on the floor of the Legislature:

"I heard one of our members get up and say that he thought it was wrong that we hire homosexuals as teachers because there'd be too much temptation there. We're making a very simple and common mistake: We're confusing homosexuality and pedophiles.

"They're not one and the same. They're different. And to make the assumption that they are the same is nothing but bigotry."

— Sen. Ray Aguilar, Grand Island

"I have yet to see any issue today with regard to the override that was caused by loss of money to someone who's rich and/or powerful."

— Sen. Tom White, Omaha

"I reckon success not by how many bills I pass but how many bad bills I stop."

— Sen. Ernie Chambers, Omaha

"If we really think we can save the world from inside this place, we've got another thing coming."

— Sen. Mike Friend, Omaha

"When Omaha prospers, the rest of us prosper. But when Lincoln prospers, the rest of us prosper as well."

— Sen. Bill Avery, Lincoln

"I have shot many a gun. I've never shot my friends. I've never shot myself."

— Sen. Norm Wallman, Cortland

"We can argue on this floor that people didn't know what they were voting on (when they repealed the Class I schools bill). ... Half of us wouldn't be here maybe, I probably wouldn't be here, if people knew what they were voting on."

— Sen. Russ Karpisek, Wilber

"Any bill we pass in here could be unconstitutional."

— Sen. DiAnna Schimek, Lincoln

"The law of this state is whatever 25 people say it is."

— Sen. Carol Hudkins, Malcolm

Through the glass

Lobbyists, who represent special interest groups, inhabit the Rotunda during the legislative session. Here's a sampling of what three veteran lobbyists with many clients have seen this session:

"There were sea changes in the legislative body, but we didn't see any diminution of the work product or in the ability to get things done. ... This session showed that we have an amazing ability to adapt. There was a movement of unseasoned senators to veterans in a short period of time."

— Larry Ruth

"One thing hasn't changed. The individual domination of Senator Chambers. That has not wavered. That has not diminished. He put his mark on bills. He slowed things down. Pieces of legislation look different because of his influence."

— Richard Lombardi

"Term limits had a lot less impact than people thought it would, due to the caliber of senators elected. ... They did the things that needed to get done. And they did it without a lot of rancor. ... The real story of the session was the 31-year-old with two years' experience who was speaker and who did a hell of a job."

— Walt Radcliffe