

We have Mrs. Bernice Crouse and Mrs. Marilyn Samuels. Would you folks please stand and be recognized. Thank you. Then Senator Beyer has guests in the north balcony. We have 50 fourth grade students and teacher from Springfield Elementary in Springfield, Nebraska. Would you students and teacher please rise so we can recognize you. And thank you for visiting us this morning. Senator Pirsch, then Senator Higgins, please.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body, Senator Chambers has about 12 amendments on this bill and I hope you will bear with me as we try to discuss each and every point of this. It may take some time, but this is something that needs to be given your full consideration.

PRESIDENT: Senator Pirsch, may I interrupt you a moment, please?

SENATOR PIRSCH: Mmm, hmm.

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Could we please have the level of conversation down so we can hear the speakers, please. (Gavel.) Let's hold the conversation down so we can hear. Thank you. Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: The need, yes, shoplifting is an increasing crime in Nebraska, estimated about a \$154 million annually. Now, why do we go to the Small Claims Court? Because it is actually a benefit also to the defendant. To go into criminal court would require an attorney, an added expense, and what we are hoping to accomplish is a resolution which the Small Claims Court was created for of small matters. Yes, we should reserve the criminal court for those shoplifters who are professionals, to those who again and again abuse and use our stores for their gain. But in the Small Claims Court we can find a resolution by a judge who would hear that same case in the other court, who would weigh the evidence and there would be no need for an attorney for the defendant which would decrease their cost and would eliminate other expenses of litigation. Hopefully, this can be resolved without...in the case of a juvenile, to go to a criminal court. Yes, I definitely think parents should know what their children are doing and they should be held responsible for those children. I have six children of my own and, believe me, I would like to know and I would like to have this kind of alternative to a criminal court suit if my child, indeed, were committing theft, stealing, which is what shoplifting is. I would hope that you would not support Senator