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FLOOR DEBATE

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forward and examine that. This afternoon we probably won't be able to get to the meat of this bill, but I...because there are two...there's a technical amendment and two amendments of other bills that two other senators asked me about putting on this bill, and we'll get to those before we'll get to the main debate on this bill. But I do want to give you a little bit of information. There have been studies by the Crash Injury Research and Engineering Network that show that inappropriately restrained children that are in ill-fitting adult seat belts are three and a half times more likely to suffer a severe injury in a crash than their appropriately restrained peers. And this is in the article that...or the pamphlet that you've received that looks like this. It's called "Child Passengers at Risk in America." It has a picture of a little girl who is within this age group that we're talking about, hanging out the window, for lack of a better word. And this is published in February of 2002, and it's some of the most recent information on this issue, and I hope you'll have a chance to take a look at that. There was also a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1999 that looked at this issue. Findings of that were that we have a significant number of kids in this particular age group who are still dying and being severely injured on highways because they're inappropriately restrained, either by not having them in a booster seat, or because they're in an adult seat belt. I should also say that an adult seat belt doesn't always restrain children. And there are instances of Nebraska children and children in the country, around the country, who have been thrown from a vehicle while in an adult safety belt, and were killed. And this is a tragedy that we can prevent happening again in our state, and...and also the severe injuries that result from children being in the wrong type of child restraint. The bill itself contains four parts, one of them that several of you have talked to me about, I voluntarily pulling with the amendment that follows. And it deletes the language that would have directed the money from the Bridgestone/Firestone settlement to the Highway Safety Division for more education and training on this issue. And I recognize the concern that you all have. This was one-time money, not taxpayer money, that was coming to the state from the fire...Bridgestone/Firestone settlement. I felt it was appropriate to use as we've done with tobacco settlement for