

first of all I want to assure you that the question that you raise about standards in terms of buildings and building codes, that is not the problem of the investigators...of the arson investigators in Omaha. We departmentalize things in the big city a little differently than we do in the rest of the state, and I think you have to realize there are some differences, and that really is the problem for permits and inspections, Senator Vickers. It has nothing to do with the arson investigators. Now I know that you are grasping to oppose this bill for various sins of the city and there are various sins in that city and I can't hope to defend them all, but that is not arson investigators that have created the problem there. We do have a Fire Marshal's office and we have the Fire Marshal's office for very unique reasons and that is to deal with all those problems that happen in greater Nebraska and not necessarily within the incorporated limits of cities, towns and etcetera. So, Senator Vickers, there is a difference in function. The Fire Marshal's is a coordinated sort of thing where it has various activities, we departmentalize them in Omaha. I would like to deal with this issue, try to deal with it in a very fair and open way and ask this body to look at it and come to understand some of the difficulties we have here. First of all, I am trying to get some things from Senator Beutler's office to give some case histories, and if anybody is hearing this, they could maybe bring that stuff down to me, return it to me so that I can use those examples. Second of all, I would like to say that in the City of Omaha we have a far larger number of arsons than are incidents in the rest of the state as a whole. In other words, better than half the arson situations happen in the metropolitan area of Omaha. That's well and way above its proportion to population. This bill is not an unusual bill. It's nothing that's brand new. It's been done in many, many other cities across this country, and it is needed because we have a particular problem in large metropolitan areas with arson. Now arson is not just a white-collar crime, you know, we watch it on television, we see people burning buildings and collecting insurance. Arson frequently and most frequently in the City of Omaha is really...most commonly occurs in the inner city in the older neighborhoods, and much of the motivation for this is vengeance. It is revenge and trying to deal with individuals in a way that will be most harmful to them, not necessarily to try to take life but to take property which is near and dear to all of us. And so, therefore, we have special situations and more difficulty in this whole question of ours. Now what we are trying to do is give the arson investigators in Omaha, who frequently