

cocaine or crack then those individuals should be punished, if they are convicted. It should not make any difference, if the individual that is selling cocaine or crack, is white or black or Chicano or whatever nationality they might be or color of skin or religion. That's what this bill provides, it provides a uniform system of punishment. It's not an easy punishment, I'm going to be the first to admit it's tough. But at the same time, as Senator Chambers has said, we live in a very violent society, people have weapons, they have guns and in order to make more money they are willing to kill other individuals. Now we've seen this problem in other cities across the nation, Washington, D.C., murder capital of the United States, Los Angeles. Large urban areas of this United States have seen an increased amount of violence as a result of the cocaine and crack sales in their particular city. It occurs because there is a lot of money involved. I handed out some information that provides a breakdown on the amount of money that can be made from the sale of coke and crack. Now, as you notice, there is an incredible markup for this...for these particular products. The products are made down in South America, but each time an individual handles that particular drug they take their share of profit out. Now, by the time that individual buys coke or crack on the streets of Omaha, it's a rather small price. The street value of cocaine can go for \$25 for a quarter of a gram. It's a small amount of money. And those individuals sometimes when they get started they'll get free samples of crack, because they sell it in such small quantities, \$5, \$10 for a hit of crack. But then the cycle of addiction begins, and those individuals have to support their habits. Now, the information...one of the other sheets that I handed out dealing with cocaine abuse shows that it is a problem in our facilities across the state, just the actual abuse. Now this isn't a problem that occurs just in Nebraska, it's across the nation, and it's a problem that we see with other types of drugs. But we're faced with the problem, in this state, that is steadily increasing. Figures show that there is an increased amount of coke and crack seizures in this state, and especially in Omaha. The graphs that I've handed out show that at least for the first quarter of this year we are above the amount of cocaine and crack seized in the City of Omaha. The State Patrol, the Lancaster County Sheriff were...did not compile this information quarterly. So we were able to at least show that there is a substantial increase in the amount of coke and crack use in the city, as well as the seizures. Now, as I pointed out prior to that big...the big seizure that occurred prior to, I believe,...it occurred some