

enforcement in it, and it does give some nonsmokers the right to speak up without worrying about being fired. It does give some employers the right to assert themselves in this particular area of a smoking policy without fear of reprisal by others in their company. It says that they can make a smoking policy, and it will be backed up by state law. It says that they can do what many others are doing now but are apprehensive that they have gone too far in asserting their rights in the workplace. This simply says they may assert their rights in the workplace and have a smoking policy, and define where it is. And I guess I'm saying that over and over again because I think you need to understand that. And there are those in the lobby that are saying that this gets into the areas that we're not into now, that is not true, at least it's not intended to be that way. It's simply intended to be a very modest approach to give nonsmokers the right to have a smoke-free atmosphere in their working place. It seems like that's only the human, natural thing to do, that they should have the rights that a smoker has. If the smoker wants to cloud up the work space they have, so be it. Well, let's say a nonsmoker has the right not to have smoke in their work space, that's what it's saying. And we're sending a message via this...by state law that this is a reasonable thing to do, the departments of health can enforce this and that there will be some progress in clean air within the workplace in businesses in Nebraska. I don't think it should necessarily be considered adverse to small business. There are many, many small businesses, as well as many, many large businesses that are in support of this. I'd ask you to read down the list of businesses that support this across the state, especially in the metropolitan areas. It's a fact of life today, it's an idea whose time has come, if you will, that we recognize the detriment of passive smoke and that people ought not have to breath in passive smoke, if they don't desire to. I would remind you, health experts say, with some confidence, 3,000 to 15,000 premature deaths each year...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: ...are the result of passive smoke. That's quite a few to be captive inhalers of passive smoke from someone else. And if we talk about individual rights, it seems to me that a nonsmoker ought to be able to have as many rights as a smoker, that's simply all that this bill is attempting to accomplish.