

gotten or have received in my office. My staff has been very communicative to me about some of the calls they have received, and the calls have been in surges. The initial calls when this first came up were from lots of people who said guns are bad, we want to limit them, we want to restrict them, vote for LB 642, Senator Ashford's amendment or bill, I should say. And then we received, after the weekend passed, another surge of calls saying vote against LB 642, you are trying to take our guns away, we are trying to defend ourselves, all those type of calls. And now in the intervening days, I am receiving a smattering of calls on both sides of the issue. The interesting thing is that those calls that I am receiving and the messages that I get clearly show that neither side really understands what the bill is trying to do. As a matter of fact, when my staff had asked some of the callers, for example, who were calling in opposition to the bill, and said, what are you against the bill, and they said, well...why are you against it? And they said, well, we just don't like it. It is restricting our guns and we have got to have them. And, well, what about LB 642 bothers you? And they said, well, I don't know, I haven't read the bill. Don't know what it is, but I got this bill from the NRA and I have got to call in and express my opposition. I would guess that half or more did not even understand what the bill is doing. It is seen in black and white terms. You are either, if you vote for LB 642, you are going to be portrayed as someone who wants to restrict gun ownership and take guns away from everyone, regardless of how they are being used, whether it is for hunting or sports purposes. If you vote...and that is if you vote for the bill. If you vote against it, you are seen as someone who is sanctioning wholesale use of guns to commit all kinds of crimes and all sorts of atrocities. There is a lot of verbal overkill on both sides, and I can appreciate Senator Wehrbein's chagrin about the note that was written to him and about him. I wish that people could have met Sarah Brady when she was here and spoke with people. She is a wonderful person. She is a wonderful advocate on this issue, who better to be an informed advocate about it as someone who has been directly affected by it. I think you would find that the statements that are attributed to her and attributed on both sides of this issue are often made for their emotional and their...well, their emotional appeal. What we really need to look at is whether we need to have some kind of reasonable restraint on the purchase of handguns.