

track, which now, as you all know, is limited to county agricultural societies and private entities, like Ak-Sar-Ben, that are nonprofit, they can hire people to run their tracks, but these are salaried individuals that come in and simply work for a set amount. What this bill would allow is for Douglas County to come in, to hire an individual, and to share a part of the profit of the race track with them. It simply would allow a little more flexibility for Douglas County as they embark on what has proven to be a very difficult task in recent years of operating a race track, of trying to make that a successful venture. There was some initial concern on the part of some of the individuals involved in horse racing, primarily the horsemen, that a for-profit individual might come in, adopt some policies that would not be to the benefit of live racing, try and make a quick profit, and then abscond with the money without really caring whether live racing continues in Nebraska. The intent of the bill, obviously, is not for that to occur. The intent of the bill is to allow Douglas County some flexibility so they can, indeed, be successful in operating live racing because the cornerstone upon which racing has been built in Nebraska is that it's an agricultural industry, that it's an industry that uses horses and trainers, and people that are all involved in the agricultural sector, and a lot of them in Nebraska itself. So, obviously, the preservation of live racing is the cornerstone of any piece of legislation, as far as I'm concerned. The committee amendment contains some language to address some of those concerns. Essentially, it indicates that the county could not lease the track to anyone, in effect, could not give up the right that it has to that racing license. The county would be the one holding the license. Any individual that's hired on the basis that this bill would allow would not be in control of the track to the extent that they would be the licensee defacto rather than Ak-Sar-Ben. They would simply be allowed to share in a portion of the profit, as the bill initially intended. This is a key bill as far as the racing industry in Nebraska goes. This is something that we need in order to allow the flagship track, which is the track operated currently by Ak-Sar-Ben and in the process of being purchased by Douglas County. This would allow that track the flexibility to operate, to make sure that the largest track in Nebraska can be successful in what has become a very difficult market, as we all know. So that, in essence, is the original intent of the bill. I'd be happy to answer any questions. There's an amendment coming up that's very important that is the final step in this attempt to preserve the racing industry, and it's probably