

parents and family members who support this law because they have lost a loved one in a motor vehicle crash. There are two losses here. There is the loss created by the death and the second equally as painful loss relating to the family who has to...who has lost a loved one or has a loved one who has been brain injured or damaged due to a motor vehicle accident. The emotional and economic cost is astronomical. It is estimated by the Nebraska Head Injury Association that approximately 64 percent of Nebraskans who suffer from brain injuries are victims of motor vehicle accidents. What we will be passing out to you now is a list of the fatalities that have occurred in the counties in which your legislative districts reside since 1986, the year the safety belt law was defeated by referendum. Look over the names and note how many of those constituents were wearing safety belts. You will see in the notations, thrown from the vehicle, thrown from the vehicle, thrown the vehicle, safety belts not used, not used, and not used, and, yes, there are a few who were wearing their safety belts. Out of 1,681 deaths from 1986 to 1991, 150 were wearing their safety belts. That is only 8.9 percent. I certainly do not suggest that safety belts will save all lives. I only wish that they would. But notice how few in number they are...are the safety belt wearers compared to those who did not wear their safety belts. This bill could save at least 40 lives a year conservatively, and I cannot name another measure that will be before this body this year that will have that type of impact. The question can be asked, why do we not wear our safety belts? I believe partially it is due to habit and partially to that universally held belief that whatever tragedy befalls our neighbor simply will not happen to us. It can't happen to me. It is just that simple. Well, you can hear people all over this state tell you that I always wear it on the interstate but I don't around town or near my house. Now that is wrong. Unfortunately, it is often dead wrong. Most fatal accidents occur within 25 miles of our homes, going less than 40 miles per hour, and rural accidents in the State of Nebraska outnumber urban accidents three to one. Due to the low usage rates and increasing death rates, it is obvious that education alone is not helping the people in this state see the light regarding the need to wear their safety belts. If education is all that is necessary, the millions of dollars that are spent on safety belt education would be more effective than they are with 32 percent of our people wearing safety belts in Nebraska. Those states that have the highest usage rate, such as Hawaii with 85 percent, and Oregon with 70 percent, have effectively combined forces with