

federal regulations or what form they will take, I suggest that we need to think about that prospect in the alternative because, with the federal mandate, we are being offered both a stick and a carrot, the stick being the diversion of highway construction funds to a safety education program, whether it turns out to be a generalized highway safety education program or a lap belt safety education program. They also offer us a carrot that you can see in the fiscal note. The prospect is that we could qualify for approximately a million dollars grant. What we're seeing here has become all too pervasive, in my view, in the federal relationship between that government and the state's. We pass a fair body of legislation each year here that is the result of federal mandates. Some of those federal mandates cost us a great deal of money. Some of those federal mandates cause us to impose public policy decisions on the citizens of the State of Nebraska that we might not otherwise make. We are apparently on the horns of another one of those federal mandated dilemmas. One of the difficulties, I think, with simply mandating seat belts is that that is not the complete solution to the objectives sought by the proponents, and that is a substantial decrease in the number of highway fatalities. My recollection is that the testimony before the Transportation Committee was that mandatory seat belt laws, by themselves, do not achieve that objective. What you need to really achieve that objective is also a very good education program and a forceful enforcement program. Neither one of those are mandated by this piece of legislation as it now stands before you. We might eventually have those things as this issue develops, I don't know, but the point of the matter is that it's my recollection the testimony was that this bill, by itself, as it now stands, would not necessarily achieve all of the objectives that the proponents desire for it, in other words a significant reduction in highway deaths.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Another point that I recall from the Transportation Committee hearing, and it was raised again by Senator Horgan in his opening, is that surveys indicate that people favor mandatory seat belts, but for some reason they don't use them. We have about 60, almost 70 percent of the people saying they would favor mandatory seat belts, but under 40 percent actually using them. I cannot explain the discrepancy and I'm not sure how I'm going to vote on this piece of legislation yet. I guess ultimately my decision may be made