

safety issue is the question of the federal carrot and stick that is out there, that Senator Wickersham talked about. And it's not a question of if, it's a quest...it's a fait accompli in that that legislation has been signed. If Nebraska does not join with 41 other states, and 6 other states who are considering similar legislation this year, in passing a mandatory safety belt law, we will lose ultimately 3 million...3 percent a year, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3 million a year in Federal Highway Construction Fund money. We are already putting \$1.5 million a year in education, for highway safety education, so that would move it up to \$4.5 million a year that we'd spend on highway safety education. It doesn't make any sense to do that. And then you need to look at the societal costs, look at the extended stay that people have when they are head injured in automobile accidents. Look at the number of people who have to impact on our Medicaid costs. The societal costs are tremendous, and we need to look at that issue very seriously. The question about the people have spoken on this, I think the people have spoken with...with 1,183 votes they spoke in 1986. Times have changed since then. Safety sells now. General Motors, and Ford, and other automobile makers in the fifties and sixties knew that fancy cars sold and that safety did not sell. Today, if you watch the television advertisements, the thing that they sell in automobiles is safety. Safety is at the forefront in issues in automobiles and highway safety, and it's an important issue to the people. And the people, by pop...by surveys and polls, have indicated that in general they support this type of legislation, they think it's important. They don't want Highway Construction Fund money diverted to encourage them to wear their safety belts. And education has to be hand-in-hand with enforcement in order to have it effective. If you look at other states that have high usage rates, they have laws and they have education programs that work hand-in-hand together. This is an important piece of legislation, it's time for Nebraska to reconsider this issue. It's time for us to have a safety belt law. All the issues are there in support of it. The arguments against it, I mean if you listen to them on the floor, they are very weak. They don't make good sense when compared to the benefits that are derived, and they are not logical arguments when you compare the importance of wearing safety belts to this somewhat nebulous argument that you don't have a right to intrude into my activities in the car. Well, we build the roads, we pay for the insurance rates, we bear the burden when people have terrible accidents, and now we will lose federal highway fund money if we