

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President, and members, this amendment to the amendment was LB...introduced as LB 1092 and, first of all, I would like to thank Senator Schellpeper for working with my office in putting this together. And what it does is it is an outgrowth of the discussions we had over the last year or so about how to provide for gun education programs in our state and we came up with a plan that is in LB 1092 that provides for a grant program through the State Patrol to provide funding to local school districts and other subdivisions that wish to undertake gun education programs. Six states in the country to date have in the last couple of years initiated, through their state governments, programs for gun education. And, certainly in Nebraska, in the last three or four months we've become aware by events that have occurred in our state about the need for gun education, especially with our children. We've had three very...one fatality and two other very serious injuries resulting from children who have picked up guns in their homes or in the homes of their friends and shot themselves or someone else. And the statistics in this country are...I can't...Madam President, may I just, I'm sorry, (gavel), it's just like, not that it makes a whole lot of difference, I just can't hear myself, which is probably good. But, be that as it may, it's an acute problem in our society, one I think that we've seen a lot of press on certainly in the last several months and I'm very gratified that we are able to work with the National Rifle Association this year to obtain their approval for going ahead with a program such as this. And I know there is going to be an interim study done on guns in schools and guns and children over the summer. But this program very simply provides \$50,000 to the State Patrol, provides for a one-half of a full-time employee of the State Patrol to administer the program and initiates a grant program for subdivisions to provide gun education. I might say at the...as an aside that the National Rifle Association, on a voluntary basis, does provide gun education, primarily hunter safety throughout the State of Nebraska through the Boy Scouts and at the schools. This program though would go beyond that and would deal with the not simply hunter safety but dealing with the every day problem of handguns in our society and how children should approach them and be educated concerning those types of weapons. It is an extremely serious problem. Ten thou...ten children a day are killed with handguns in our society and, obviously, we all have read about...day in and day out about the tragedies that occur