

discussions now with the Fiscal Office and will begin to make sure that we at least procedurally have the right things in place for this commission. I think it's probably appropriate at this point in time to give the body some idea of what I hope to accomplish and what our problem is. The Nebraska Constitution was written many, many years ago. Obviously we even had a territorial type of constitution in this state before we became a state. We borrowed a lot of our provisions from the State of Iowa. And through that period of time we've had a number of constitutional amendments. Our last constitutional convention, which is one of the two ways that we have of changing our constitution, the other way is obviously for the Legislature to vote and put an amendment to the constitution before the voters, the other is to call a constitutional convention for the purpose of doing that. The constitutional convention last occurred in this state in 1919 and 1920. And if you look at your statute books or bills that you'll read through this year, and perhaps from years past, you'll see that a number of things were changed in 1919 and 1920. And the reason was is that was the major revision of our constitution in the State of Nebraska. At that point in time there were 41 proposals submitted, 41 of those at least were passed by the voters, 41 major changes to update the constitution from the time of its inception, roughly in the 1860's, until the 1920's. Since that period of time most people have no idea, they think the Nebraska Constitution is similar to the United States Constitution, that it's a fairly inflexible document, it's the rule book of which we all must abide by. And quite frankly, the Constitution of Nebraska places limits on the Legislature, on the executive branch and gives a great deal of general what we call plenary powers to act, and does reserve certain powers for the people, those are powers of initiative and petition, of course, and they'll be debated later on this year. But since we had our constitutional convention in 1919 and 1920 there's been 222 proposed constitutional amendments submitted by the Legislature through last year. We've adopted and the voters have passed 149 changes. So our small document or our simple state constitution has 149 patchwork amendments to it since 1920. Most all of those were probably very well intentioned amendments. They didn't always fit in, and generally most of them are done in response to a crisis or a problem the Legislature had or that the people wanted to change. I think Amendment 1, a few years ago, for personal property tax, that as a result of a ruling of the Supreme Court this state leaped into action and said we've got to change the rules, we don't like the way the constitution is and we're going to change