

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I turned on my light basically to give Senator Wehrbein a chance. He thought his time was up. I only had one comment and Senator Chambers is real busy. I had a question, a comment. And the question I wanted to pose to him, but I see he's pretty busy taking up with the time, and so I guess if they work this out I'll also yield my time.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Madam Chairman, members of the body, I realize that Senator Wehrbein is going to work out an agreement with Senator Chambers to just have it to the State Patrol. But I hope everybody notices that Omaha Police Department did come in on this bill. They did testify in front of the committee in favor of this bill. And if you...I have an article from the World-Herald that says that police animals in Omaha are protected by a city ordinance passed in 1992 and that it's a misdemeanor. But in this lan...and they do have 11 horses and 2 drug dogs. And they wanted to protect their horses, as I understand it. And in this bill the penalties for harassment is a Class III misdeme...or a Class IV misdemeanor, unless the harassment results in the death of the police animal, in which case it's a Class IV felony. And we'll lose that, Omaha senators will lose that if this compromise is worked out between Senator Wehrbein and Senator Chambers. None of their concern, of the Omaha Police Department, will be addressed by this bill and we will not have in state statute any protection for these animals. The only protection we'll have is this ordinance in the City of Omaha. I imagine and I was not at the hearing, but maybe Senator Hall or Senator Abboud or Senator Lindsay or any of the other Omaha senators that are in the Judiciary Committee could let us know what their concerns were and whether they wanted this bill, and why they wanted this bill, because they did testify as proponents. And I imagine they wanted the increase in the penalties and at least the language in state statutes. And now if this compromise is made and adopted it's cutting out the Omaha Police Department. So I wanted to bring that to their attention. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Witek. Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President, members. The issue