

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, if you look at the makeup of the Judiciary Committee and realize that six of the seven members present voted to kill this bill, it should let you know how bad the bill really was, and if you read it, you can see it for yourself. When they talk about allocating blame and the political subdivision has to be proven negligent, you make it almost impossible for the innocent third party to recover. But because that has been discussed and may be discussed by others, I want to finish what Senator Lindsay brought up about Ron Lahners. He had been a Lancaster County Attorney, a U.S. Attorney, and he did say that when I got this on the books originally, he was opposed to it, thought it was the worst thing that could happen, but now that he has seen the proliferation of high-speed chases, he has seen the injuries, and has represented people, he now thinks this is the best thing that could be on the books. He thinks it should not even be modified, and he certainly spoke strongly against Senator Maurstad's bill, and he's been, Mr. Lahners, in law enforcement all his life. I just have a reprint of a column that appeared in the Omaha World-Herald, February, the 4th, it's a reprint from the Los Angeles Times, and the headline is "Time to Cut Chases." This is what it says: "The police have no business chasing suspected criminals at high speeds through the streets of a community, regardless of the crime. In Orange County, California, last month, five people were killed and one was critically injured as a result of three ill-advised high-speed pursuits. All this carnage was because of three relatively minor crimes; a traffic violation, the looting of camera equipment, and a car theft. I've yet to see a police officer speed through an intersection, even with sirens blaring and lights flashing. They know better. Yet too many police officers apparently have no qualms about provoking suspects into barreling through intersections and putting innocent lives at risk, however minor the crime. It's time for lawmakers to give us innocent citizens and our families a break. Don't we have enough scenarios of being at the wrong place at the wrong time to worry about--berserk gunmen randomly shooting in public places, drunken drivers, red-light runners, car-jackers, muggers? Don't put us at an even greater risk. Stop the high speed pursuits now." That was in the Los Angeles Times. What we are talking about here that we are trying to preserve is some protection from the innocent...for the innocent third party. Senator Lindsay touched on the rationale that I gave when I first brought that provision. If high-speed chases are for a