

think that that case would just fade away. I think there's a specter here and a possibility based on the fact that the, for example, the death penalty has widespread support in this state, and some people are actually very, very, very fervent about their support for it. I'm afraid that putting economic factors in the administration of justice would lead to, how should I say it, perhaps some elements of vigilanteism, if you will, of people taking the law into their own hands. I firmly believe in the rule of law, and that economic considerations should not be considered in a criminal case. I understand that the concept of the death penalty is very controversial and some individuals certainly in this body do not subscribe to that and would like to change that. But I don't think the factor of putting economic considerations as a way to somehow determine what course of action should be taken is a good policy move at all. I think that the rule of law and order is extremely important in this state and should be safeguarded, and that economic considerations should not be put into the equation, especially and mainly when we're dealing with the criminal offenses that we're talking about, I just simply disagree with that. I do respect Senator Chambers' arguments, but these are my feelings on the matter. I would like to...out of respect for Senator Chambers, I would yield the balance of my time, having said that, and also putting the consideration in people's minds that when these factors are put in that, you know, we certainly don't want people taking the law into their own hands as a question of, well, we'll save the county some money. And I think that that is...I don't believe that's ever happened, but we want to make sure that that never happens. So if Senator Chambers would like the rest of my time, I would gladly give it to Senator Chambers.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Chambers, you have two minutes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Hilgert. Members of the Legislature, most homicides, in this case, don't carry the possibility of the death penalty, plea bargains are often the rule in some counties. And I would say in most homicides where a first degree murder charge is filed it's to force the defendant to enter a plea, and I'd venture to say, I haven't checked the statistics, that happens in most cases. But it becomes a factor in a part of the equation when a county is using the fact that there are legal expenses associated with the