

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

February 22, 1999 LB 356

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Bromm.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to report to the body that the Transportation Committee did hear this bill, LB 356. We did have the hearing on February 8th. We did advance it to General File within just a few days after that. It was unanimous vote of the committee to send the bill to the floor. In the hearing, we had very strong proponent testimony from a number of groups, as well as some individuals. We had the Safety and Health Council of Greater Omaha; we had the Nebraska Safety Council supporting the bill; Nebraska Trucking Association supporting the bill; MADD of Nebraska; Lancaster County Health Department; the Nebraska Insurance Information Service, insurance companies, basically; Bellevue Police Department and some other...couple three other individuals. We had the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety in a neutral capacity and another...another agency of the state, I can't think of what this stands for, NHTSA, that's the Highway Traffic Safety Administration, neutral. There were no opponents, which surprised me. I have a similar provision in another bill, that's still in committee, to Senator Byars' bill, and I'd received, oh, I would say less than a half a dozen letters in opposition, but I've received numerous letters in support. I think it's...it's...it really all is about safety. And I don't...I don't discount Senator Chambers' concerns and certainly want to hear them and address them if there's any way possible, but with any bill there's going to be...there's going to be some arguments on both sides, but the one that I think seems to come down most strongly that you have to hear, if you listen to this issue, is the matter of increasing deaths on our highways and how can we reverse that trend. Nineteen ninety-five we had 254 fatalities on Nebraska highways; 1996 we had 293; 1997, 302; 1998, 315. Comparing 1998 with just 1995 is a significant difference, significantly more deaths. And I set about this summer, starting about May, to have some committee hearings and we also spent some time with different groups, the Department of Roads, the Highway Safety Office, federal and