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SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President, colleagues. LB 60 was brought to me by the Nebraska Real Estate Commission. It specifically does a couple of different things that are quite simple but I think quite important. It clarifies that there are separate licensing examinations that must be passed for salespersons and brokers. This has been a practice that has been in effect for many, many years, but the statutory language was apparently not completely clear that there should be a separate licensing exam for each of those individuals and must be passed before they can practice in their profession. And the second piece requires all original applicants, both residential and nonresidential, to have a fingerprint-based criminal background check completed through the Federal Bureau of Investigation prior to the approval of the application. I think this has come about, and I'm not certain that we have had any huge problems in the state of Nebraska, but in other areas there have, unfortunately, been individuals who might not be of the most savory character and might have some dubious background. And for that reason, the commission felt that a criminal background check...and, obviously, the fingerprint-based gives more access information than a nonfingerprint-based background check. This applies only to original applicants, both resident and nonresident. It is not a situation where all existing licensees have to go back to have a fingerprint check, background check to maintain their license. So the bill is simple but, again, it is basically consumer oriented to try to improve protections for individuals who would use professional realtors. And I would ask that you advance LB 60.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Byars. You've heard the opening on advancement of LB 60 by Senator Byars. Open for discussion on that, Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Byars, members of the Legislature, I suppose I am going to end up doing this, but it's always a little troublesome when we seem to be moving from one group of employees to the next one. You know, first we started out with groups of people who dealt with children. Now we're dealing with professionals who don't deal with children, and maybe that's where we're going in this society. We just simply fingerprint everybody and be done with it. I did want to ask