

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

April 1, 2003

LB 265

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. Concealed carry is certainly controversial and I do enjoy the debate. It reminds me a bit of debate on the abortion issue. You are either for it or against it, and there is no middle ground. And I think most of us would prefer that more handgun...that we wouldn't have more handguns on the street, and I think the proponents are saying that there won't be more handguns on the street, just as we hope there would be no more...would be no more abortions. The problem with this is there is a perception that Nebraska would be safer if laws were liberalized that would permit loaded guns to be hidden beneath one's clothing. And I say, you know, what if the proponents are wrong? What if everyone who could buy a weapon isn't safe with a hidden weapon? What if everyone who can buy a weapon isn't safe with that hidden weapon? So, you know, I question why we're anxious to put ourselves and our police officers and our families at risk. According to a publisher in Texas, ECM, persons in Texas that were issued concealed and carry permits were 66 percent more likely to be arrested than the general public. And Houston does have...they're among the highest murder rates in the country. And I think if we consider the fact that Texas has more murders, Texas with...that has concealed carry, Texas has more murders than Japan, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, France, Germany, and half a dozen other large industrialized countries combined; that's all of them. The proponents of concealed carry, the arguments remind me of the tobacco industry that told us that cigarettes are safe. And I...perhaps an additional component to this bill might be that we have in the qualifications of obtaining a concealed permit is that anyone seeking a permit would have to show need for that permit. And I think Senator Raikes early on in the debate this morning highlighted that. Now demonstrating a need gives us all at least some assurance that the vast majority of people that we encounter on the highway or in a supermarket or in a grocery store won't have a loaded weapon that could harm us. I support the right of every American to bear arms and to protect their families. However, just because you have a constitutional right to carry a weapon doesn't mean you have a constitutional right to conceal a weapon. In addition to the fiscal impact of this bill, and I think that we've done too little debate on the fiscal impact and certainly don't know what it will be with the bill as amended,