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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR COMBS: Okay. And does that include data relative to the act, the general population too?

SENATOR THOMPSON: You know, I have two giant three-ring spiral books that my staff calls my gun books, and because this has been debated so many times since I've been here, I've been collecting that information. I'm going to have to look through. I've only got one gun book here with me today.

SENATOR COMBS: Well, and I would really like that to be the focus of our discussion. It's nice to talk about possibilities and what we think might happen and what we're afraid of might happen, but with over 40 other states in the United States having enacted this legislation, I think experience would speak much louder than any kind of prediction that we would want to make. Senator Tyson just gave me something. I'll digest it and maybe put my light on here in a minute to read. But I've always been an outcome-oriented person. I believe that in being process oriented we talk about possibilities, and that's okay in the beginning. If we were the first state to enact this then, yes, possibilities and potential outcomes would have a major part in my decision on whether or not to do this. But when over 40 states, I don't know the exact number, perhaps more than 45 out of 50 already have this enacted, I would be interested to know exactly what, you know, why our state law enforcement officers and people feel that they cannot make the mark in enforcing the law when their brothers in 45 other states are doing so successfully. I'd like to know where they feel they don't meet the mark, so to speak, in being able to enforce the law as their brothers do in other states. Let's see, I will read what Senator Tyson gave me here, a paragraph. Both John B. Holmes, Harris County District Attorney, let's see...okay, here we go. Since then, serious...

SPEAKER BROMM: One minute.

SENATOR COMBS: ...crime in Texas has dropped 50 percent faster than the nation as a whole. Was that, Senator Tyson, what you had for me to read here? For example, during the 1990s, Texas' murder rate dropped 52 percent, compared to 33 percent nationally, and the rape rate fell by 22 percent compared to