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FLOOR DEBATE

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of this planet is have a means that definitely proves both guilt and, perhaps more importantly, innocence as well. In 1993, Nebraska passed, at the urging of the federal government, the most basic of the DNA statutes. I would call your attention to the map that has been passed out to you, and you will see that there are very few states that are white and...but Nebraska is one of them. This is...map is nearly two years old and, for instance, Louisiana, which also is white, now has the most comprehensive DNA legislation of all of the states. Well, perhaps we need a heated discussion considering what the weather is outside, but whereas I might be a rookie presenting his first bill, this bill speaks for itself. In fact, the consensus is that no other investment in our criminal justice system will do more to protect the innocent, convict the guilty and reduce human suffering, and do it as efficiently and at the least cost. Well, where are we with our current statutes? They provide that the state DNA database maintain records related to forensic evidence, DNA of convicted offenders of the DNA Detection of Sexual and Violent Offenders Act. That's the most basic act. Samples should be available to the CODIS System, and that's the national system, the Combined DNA Index System. This system means that the Federal Bureau of Investigation National DNA Identification Index System that allows for the storage and exchange of DNA records that are submitted by state and other local forensic DNA laboratories. It also, of course, provides for research and quality control as the methods to do this test improve. What we propose in LB 139, and this is a carry-over from last year's legislation, is to add very basic steps so that we may proceed in bringing our state up to speed with the rest of the states. We add that the records relating to missing persons, relatives of missing persons, and unidentified human remains be included in the DNA database. Records shall be used for quality assurance, training and research, and harmonize the provisions relating to the DNA sample bank and state DNA database. What we have found, however, is this; is that Nebraska is far behind other states. We mentioned Louisiana, but Virginia has been at this about as long as anybody, and that is over 20 years. In talking to our various officials, and I guess I might say...back up for a second and say this; is that there was an interim hearing conducted about this and there are...Senator Dwite Pedersen will present a committee amendment