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FLOOR DEBATE

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bill doesn't go far enough and there are people who think this bill goes too far. But what we will have an opportunity to do is to debate the bill. What I believe the Health and Human Services Committee has proposed to you, which will come in the amendment, is about as far as we can go as a state that we can get consensus for at this point in time. What has been interesting about this debate over the years is that I looked back in 1979 to the legislative debate and the committee hearing on the first Clean Indoor Air Act which passed by one vote. All the arguments were exactly the same. And the first Clean Indoor Air Act said that restaurants should set aside a section for nonsmokers. It was extremely controversial. All the arguments about whether a private business should have public health standards came into effect. Worries that people were going to lose business came into the argument. Arguments about whether people who have health conditions should just stay home, which comes into this argument. And if you read the testimony and just blocked out the names, it would look very similar to what you have today. As I said, that passed by one vote and now many, many years later, you would look back and you'd say, isn't that incredible how controversial it was just to have a nonsmoking area in a restaurant? So today I'm asking you to be progressive, to take all the information which we'll be presenting to you that has to do with public health, to take into consideration the benefits to the workers, to children, to the adult population of our state to make this a place where you can breathe clean air. Restaurants have become public places. They always were, but they are attended. People go out to eat at a rate that they didn't 20, 30 years ago. It's a different place in that the public is there all the time. And the bill doesn't get to the thornier issue of bars which some people, quite frankly, when you carry reform efforts, you get shot at from both sides. And so, I'm kind of on the point of getting criticized for not doing that and not going far enough. But I think we can protect close to 80 to 90 percent of the population if we enact the bill as the Health and Human Services Committee has expanded it. And essentially, these are the elements of the bill. It expands smoke-free work sites to include all restaurants in Nebraska, which is approximately 80 percent of all employees and...8 percent of all employees in Nebraska work in restaurants. It allows smoking in bars that do not serve