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Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 11, 2006 LB 454

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Time, Senator.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Senator Kopplin, followed by Senator Thompson, Schimek, and Engel.

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the body. This bill has been on our agendas for a long time, and probably you've made your decision and there's not much convincing remains to be done. But I do want to offer a few points for your consideration. I'm no longer a gun owner, but I don't have a...any problem with those of you who decide that you wish to be. When I chose to no longer participate in the sport of hunting, I disposed of my guns. The only purpose, in my mind, to have a gun is to use it to kill something or someone, and if you're not going to do that, a gun around the house then is simply a temptation to the young people who may visit my home. Well, that said, I'd like to talk a little bit about some things I've heard in this gun discussion. One of the things that really caught my attention was the claim that it's been shown that concealed carry lowers the crime rate. So I'm wondering, I've done a lot of studies in my life, how could that be claimed? I wonder what kind of a study could be done to either prove or disprove that? Well, what I'm finding is that you can't. These claims are made...many of these claims are made on the basis of a study by John Lott and David Mustard at the University of Chicago. Their quotations or their findings were quoted many times by gun enthusiasts. The problem is that later studies showed that those findings were greatly flawed. In an Ohio concealed handgun case, David Mustard, under oath, admitted that the Lott-Mustard study omitted variables which could explain the changes in crime rate due to reasons other than concealed carry. The study did not account for many of the major factors that he believed affect crime, including crack cocaine, wealth, drug and alcohol use, police practices, and community policing. So for me, at least, reliable data that would success crime rates drop simply doesn't exist. I received quite a bit of e-mail and letter input on this bill, mostly in favor, sometimes presenting good arguments, sometimes questioning my intelligence, but mostly telling me, this is what