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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 454

this for much longer than that, but it brought back some information I thought was relevant and worth sharing. Particularly this...the letter that we received in 2003 was from the Police Chief Association of Nebraska, PCAN, and it was signed by the president at the time, Larry Thoren from Hastings. And some of his comments related...obviously related to the bill at the time; it was LB 265. But some of his comments are very relevant today, and I want to bring those out on the floor, for the record. They take the position that law enforcement officers currently presume that individuals are not carrying concealed carry weapons or carrying weapons. When they do suspect weapons on someone, they conduct what is referred to as a felony stop. And I guess their point is that officers in a situation don't understand up front if that individual has a permit to carry a concealed carry weapon, and then will be treated as in a felony stop, and they prefer not to put--they, meaning the officers' association--prefers not to put their officers in that position. And certainly, they understand that it's brought forth so that honest, law-abiding citizens can protect themselves, and they also then ask--this one hit home. Again, from their perspective, how would you as a senator or a citizen expect a police officer to handle the following situation: Police are called to a store or a mall, and you've got several people with guns drawn. How do you know which one has a permit to carry legally, and/or does the other person have a permit, as well? You're putting our police officers in a position, again, to make judgments that they shouldn't have to make. They urge that there are other alternatives to self-defense--pepper spray is nonlethal self-protection, and I like this one, it's a forgivable form of defense. Handguns are not a forgivable form of defense, if used incorrectly. And I have no doubt that at some point along the line, probably very soon, that you will have an unfortunate incident with someone that has paid \$100, fogged a mirror, taken a bit of a training test, and you'll have someone inadvertently shot, killed, and/or injured, and I think that's too bad. I personally don't support concealed carry weapons. My district, a suburb in Omaha and Washington County, the majority of the people there do not support concealed carry weapons. The more vocal that I hear from are the...are folks that do want to carry weapons above all else. Many of them are single-issue people, and that kind of