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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 454

think we are at the point where we're running the clock, but I think there's some value in the kind of debate that we've had this afternoon. I would like to read a bit from the Omaha World-Herald editorial that I referenced a little while ago, because it raises some, I think, interesting points that haven't necessarily been covered in this debate, and I'm not going to read the whole thing. I'll just start with the paragraph that says, gun ownership is a constitutionally protected right, and many Nebraskans legitimately assert that right, keeping rifles, shotguns, and other weapons in their home. In addition, the law allows residents to carry guns openly, if they like, though, as Senator Combs has said, that is not usually socially acceptable. She doesn't explain why carrying a concealed weapon would be socially acceptable. Nebraska is a low crime state. What is the day-to-day threat that requires day-to-day fire power? Drunks or interstate drivers, people waiting in line at the grocery, or people getting a candy bar at the convenience store should not be carrying hidden firearms. And in parentheses it says, a note: Nonresistance is often the safest alternative when confronted by a violent criminal. The National Association of Convenience Stores has said that if someone resists during a robbery, the chances of violence go up by more than 80 percent. Not good odds. Combs' bill would require an eye test, a training course, and a background check to get a permit. It has been estimated that some 64,000 Nebraskans would do so. While the process doesn't make a concealed carry law any more attractive, at least permits wouldn't be handed out like Cracker Jacks. The thoughts of William J. Muldoon, the chief of police in Nebraska City, summarizes the case against the law well. In an essay last year on the "More Commentary" page, he wrote that the difference between an average citizen armed for self-protection and an average citizen committing criminal assault is often simple provocation. Permitting concealed weapons adds fuel to the fire of anger and frustration, he wrote. In my 27 years of law enforcement experience, according to Muldoon, I have seen far too many instances where a firearm in the home was not used for self-defense, as intended, but instead was used in a domestic assault on a family member, in a tragic accident, or by a family member to commit suicide--the voice of experience. Combs' LB 454 should sink before Muldoon's fears are realized. Thank you.