

they had a right for a cease and desist order, but there was no right to enjoin. And if you are talking about sexual harassment, which is where this comes from in this bill, primarily you may be looking at some damages issues. NEOC did not have the authority to issue or award general or special damages, so that simply cannot be done by NEOC, it has to be done by a court of law, and this, basically, just clarifies that, in fact, it would be done by a court of law. We are hoping to be able to speed up the whole process, to eliminate unnecessary investigations, to make sure that the investigators have the right to go in with the criteria that is clearly defined so they are not investigating cases that they simply have no jurisdiction to look at, and then that this whole process will speed up and make sure that the rights and causes of action that these people have are more adequately protected. We do put in the language regarding the language which was objectionable in NEOC, which was a complainant who has suffered a physical, emotional, or financial harm as a result of a violation of the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act shall be entitled to temporary or permanent injunctive relief, general or special damages, reasonable attorney's fees, and costs, but that must come from the court. So this is a substantial change from what we have done in the past. We hope that it is a better system. It eliminates what, I think, were, first off, an obstructive step in the process, the problem with the investigations. I'd be happy to answer any questions about that. The information we have, we met with a number of senators who were there at a meeting with some people, and they explained the concern that they had. These are people who understood the workings of the agency and clearly knew that there were some major problems in investigation that caused an inordinate time delay for these people who were seeking some sort of redress for their rights. These cases can go on for a year or 18 months, and at the end of the 18 months, they may have nothing more than they started with except some determination by the commission that, yeah, you had your rights violated, you have the right to go to district court and enforce your remedies. That seems to me to be sort of silly. I know that Senator Abboud worked on this amendment. I think Senator Landis has looked at it very carefully,...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR HOHENSTEIN: ...along with their staff, and I would now stop and answer any questions any of you have regarding this