

have said before, is that when this Legislature is faced with a specific concern and problem that is brought to us by a senator, a group, whomever it is, that in the area of collective bargaining we have an inordinate amount of precedent to take a look at that. And the fact that the City of Omaha had bargained that issue away, or whatever, 20 years ago does not abrogate the fact that we should and must take a look at it, especially in the cir...under the circumstances that exist in Omaha. What I would say finally in response to the arguments for not advancing this bill, is that if we make a decision...the decision to take geographic distribution of officers off the table, in effect, under the collective bargaining statutes, we are reopening many other issues for collective bargaining, and very likely there could be a benefit financially, or some other way, for...to police officers. But again, that isn't the point. The point is that even though there has been a seniority system developed in the Omaha Police Division that is reflected in the collective bargaining agreement on distribution of officers, it seems to me that the issue is I can't...Mr. Speaker, I just can't hear at all. Could I just have a gavel.

SPEAKER BAACK: (Gavel.)

SENATOR ASHFORD: The issue is not one of seniority, the issue is giving the police chief the authority to call police officers to a situation or circumstance when he feels that that is necessary, not the...based on seniority or based on anything, but based on education, based on skill level, based on whatever other factor the police chief takes into consideration in deciding where he's going to put his officers. Whether they be male, or female, or 20 years on the force, or 2 years on the force, or 30 years on the force, the issue is public safety, in my mind, solely, because collective bargaining will go on, collective bargaining will make up for this particular issue in September, when collective bargaining starts, or if the parties sit down and bargain now. It is a critical enough issue for me that we continue to debate this on Select File and to try to find a way to address this further on the collective bargaining issue. But, again, the overriding concern is public safety, the ability of the chief, not based on seniority, but based on whatever criteria he may determine is appropriate to determine where officers go. And finally, there was some statements made about moving the president of the union around 50 times. What we have...we are unique...