

towns in Nebraska will not have a chief of police. They are provided law enforcement coverage through an arrangement with the county sheriff. I don't know whether there are some chiefs who might serve more than one city or not, but it is a fact that not every city will be affected even if it falls within the confines of this amendment because they may not have a chief. I think that we ought to see this in terms of a management prerogative. It goes to the issue of public safety. In the past in Omaha, as has not happened in other places, mayors have given up this power in exchange for concessions from the police union. Some people ask why won't the city dig its feet in and say, if this provision is not exempted or removed from the table the city will not agree to anything. When the city has reached an impasse and issues have been submitted to the Commission on or of Industrial Relations, the city has gotten the short end of the stick. I was doing some inquiries as to why they have a present system in Omaha of four days on, two days off. If you read the article that I handed out to you, you'll see where the mayor pointed out that Omaha police officers work only 196 days out of the year, which is fewer days than a lot of teachers. I'm giving you this information, and I guess he did too, so you won't feel that you're picking on a set upon disadvantaged group. The average salary of an Omaha police officer is 44,000 dollars. In certain areas of the city it's even higher than that and the way they jack up their salary, in my area for example, is to give a lot of traffic tickets, then set the court dates on their day off. Then then get...I don't know if it's time and a half or double time pay for going to court. So it had reached such a bad point, I was talking to a representative of the black union in Omaha called the Midwest Guardians, they had to stop some of these overzealous officers from writing the kinds of tickets that they were writing because it was happening only in our area and the officers were using it as a way to jack up their overtime pay. This is what contributes to that 44,000 dollars a year. The Omaha Police Union is one of the most powerful organizations in the state. Mayors have been in fear of them, city council is in fear of them and there are some people on the floor of the Legislature who have been put in a position, if not of fear, of having to go along with the position that they desire. So it would be impractical and naive to sit here and pretend that the mayor and the city council will be able to wave a wand and change all these provisions in a negotiating session with the police union. There was an issue where they did reach an impasse and it went to the Commission on Industrial Relations and the police wound up getting, I think,