

something like a 7 percent salary increase so Industrial Relations has been very kind to the Omaha Police Division. This bill touches none of those issues, only this one. I mentioned some of those others to you so you can have a context in which to think about the Omaha Police Union and its dealings with the city. This amendment that is being offered would extend the provisions of 717 throughout the state. I hope you will adopt the amendment. If you have any questions I'm prepared to answer them.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Hall?

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President and members. I have no problem with Senator Chambers' amendment to the bill to extend it to the balance of the state. The...but I do object to the bill as it's been introduced. The issue, the original premise that Senator Chambers makes that it is a public safety issue has to be addressed up-front, otherwise you get handcuffed to the entire argument of how do you deal with this issue. If you don't support this measure and you agree with that original premise then you don't support public safety, in essence, and I just rise to state that, like it or not, whether the issue's been bargained away, whether you agree with that or not, it is one of a collective bargaining issue, otherwise the bill wouldn't be here. The issue is in the agreement that the chief of police and the officers union or the police union has negotiated over the years with the city and the chief. It is one that has been a substantive issue all along with regard to when they work, where they work, if seniority is applicable or not. All the...all this bill does is it says that we're not going to address that anymore; we're not going to let you do that. We, as a Legislature, are going to say that this aspect of collective bargaining is no longer going to be on the table; that we're going to give it solely to one party, one side, and they will have the ability to determine how that is going to be done. The work hours of any group of individuals that is in a collective bargaining situation is negotiated. The argument that Senator Chambers makes is that, because of public safety, you have to take this off the table. If you begin this process, you will begin the process of looking at any number of issues that are in the contract that is agreed to, collectively bargained for and between the parties involved, that being the chief, the city and the union. And you will see the other side, if you are successful here in stripping this provision off of the table, out of the collective bargaining agreement, then you