

question and a concern and a legitimate concern for this body to be concerned about because where are we going to be 10, 20 years down the road and we need to look seriously at that and I think perhaps we need to look at the overall structure of our retirement system for every system. But the current system that we have which is a defined benefit plan guarantees a retirement to State Patrol officers. Senator Landis makes the claim, well you shouldn't compare us to other states. Well we compare ourselves to other states on every other issue that comes down the pike, economic development, law enforcement, crime bills, I can't think of a bill that we don't compare ourselves to every other state. It's legitimate to look at what the level of retirement is in other states and compare that to Nebraska and see if we're being competitive and if you look at those facts you will see that Nebraska is probably a little bit on the high end now requiring state troopers to work 30 years currently and retire, the earliest they can retire is at age 55 with a mandatory 60. We're saying you can work 25 years, retire at age 50. Senator Wesely is correct when he points out that state patrolmen don't get social security which knocks them down in their ability to create post-retirement income and so that's a concern. We do treat patrol officers differently than we treat other employees because of the very nature of the type of work that they're in. The unfunded liability is always going to be a concern when you have defined benefit plans. It's always going to be a concern when you deal with retirement issues, but I think if you look at the State Patrol plan, currently it is 115 percent funded. Currently we're asking the State Patrol to put in 8 percent. We're putting in 8 percent and I think it's legitimate to say in the future and I think state patrolmen would tell you this that indeed if there is an immediate unfunded liability in the future that we may have to ask them to make a higher contribution level or indeed we may and probably should begin to look at defined contribution plans for all of these retirement plans rather than defined benefits because the cost long-term as many of us become eligible for retirement, the long-term impact is going to be great on the state. But that's not the issue today. The issue today is whether or not a state patrolmen who has worked 25 years for the State of Nebraska ought to be able to retire at age 50 and I think Senator Fisher is probably right when he says that they should. Thank you.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Horgan. Senator Schellpeper, your light is next.