

probation officers who have caseloads of 140, 150 cases. They are overworked, they are underpaid. And from talking to the two gentlemen that discussed this with me earlier, about 80 percent of the people, at least in the Douglas County Probation Office, work second jobs to make ends meet. They are already overworked, and we are putting them back to work so that they can feed their families, and we talk here for days and hours about welfare reform or what can we do for people that are being forced off of welfare. We have people who are working more than 40 hours a week in a very serious occupation that they would probably be better off going onto welfare. Most of the probation officers, if you talk to them, do it because they are committed to it, because they want to make a difference, and because I think they do make a difference. If we are not going to be committed to the Probation Department, we had better be committed, as Senator Pedersen accurately stated, we had better be committed to instead of paying 20 or 21 thousand dollars to probation officers, who are supervising 100 or 125 cases, we had better be prepared to pay 18 to 22 thousand dollars a year to incarcerate one of those cases that ends up in jail because we have inexperienced probation officers because we didn't pay them enough. I think I have talked with several of you who have talked to probation officers in your own districts, who have indicated that you are losing experienced probation officers to the federal system, to Iowa, to other surrounding states, or outside of the probation system, leaving correctional work because they simply can't afford to do it. We are losing experienced probation officers and it seems to me rather ludicrous for us to even be paying the \$19,000 a year that we start our probation officers at, if all it is is a training ground for the Iowa Department of Corrections. I don't think that's a wise use of our money. I think if we are going to be spending training money, it ought to be for Nebraska probation officers, but that is not what we are doing. We are simply providing training for other systems, and it just seems to me one of the most unwise uses of money we can do. To again, I guess, mention the importance of, and I, by the way, I am under no illusions that this is...that this is going to jam right through. It's...I'd say the chances are slim that this is going to make it, but I think it is important for us to go on record as the crime fighters that we are to make sure that we actually are fighting crime, that we actually are doing something because we can talk about putting people in jail, we can talk about putting people under mandatory minimum sentences, we can talk about removing the sentencing cap and putting them in for longer