

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Senator Pirsch, the Chair recognizes Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Again, I feel like Daniel in the lions den and the lions are growing restless and hungry, I can tell. But I think I should point out to you the reparations program that was left in to the budget, the state is required to fund, and only 35 percent of reparations funds will be coming to the state for reparation programs. That means you have to put out the money first by the state. In the victim-witness assistance there is...and I'm reading from the federal requirements, the federal law, the amounts of grants for the victim-witness program is \$100,000 to each state, that is flat out, and then the portion of the then remaining available money to each state that results from a distribution among the states of half of \$100 million program. Senator Warner was correct. Nebraska is eligible for \$400,000. Now 35 percent of our reparations is not nearly that much. You must put out that money before you get 35 percent from the federal government. The only criteria on victim-witness programs is that you have these programs established, that you have eligible crime victim assistance programs providing assistance to victims in your state. It does not...it is not based on the amount of money that our state appropriates. This is not general fund from the federal, it is from the fines and penalties of federal prisoners, justifiable money to come back to victims. If we do not have victim-witness programs in Nebraska, we will not be eligible for the \$400,000 funds from those criminals' fines and penalties. Victims reparations serves too few and it is often a year before anyone is helped by them. Victim-witness assistance is there from the time that the victim is victimized. It provides also, I might tell you, understanding of our criminal justice system to the average citizen, understanding of the plea bargaining, and the process, and what is more it eliminates that frustration and the feeling, by the citizens of our state, that the criminal gets all the breaks and makes the average citizen feel that our criminal justice system is not for the citizen. I realize that this is a small amount of money, but we have rejected smaller...

SENATOR MOREHEAD: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: ...and larger. But it is a very important