

57 million Americans become victims, \$75 billion is lost to crime, and \$25 billion is spent on the criminal justice system. What about Nebraska? While some crimes have decreased, murder and manslaughter has a 35 percent increase. Forcible rape is 4 percent increased. Felony assault is four-tenths of a percent increased. Incidentally, the national crimes I read from was from a victim witness unit in Sarpy County. I spoke before of two decades of criminal rights put into the law by the courts and legislatures. The Miranda, the exclusionary rules, and this certainly we do not want to take away. It wasn't only until the late seventies and eighties that people started saying, hey, what about me, what about the victim? Nebraska legislators heard this, and they understood this, and they agreed that something should be done. What have you legislators, who have been here since 1978, accomplished? Let me tell you. You established a bill of rights for victims and witnesses. I have passed out some of those which were furnished by our Lincoln and also the Sarpy County victim witness units. We established a volunteer program for victim witness, and I might stress the volunteer aspect of that, to distribute information to the public, to the victims about their rights, and to directly help and treat the innocent victim who often had been ignored, forgotten or worse trampled and abused and further victimized by the criminal justice system, treated these people who had feelings and intelligence and were innocent victims as a piece of evidence, often, instead of as a person. You helped establish our county attorneys' attention in recognizing that they need to remember that victims are their only...that victims have them for their only counsel. Victims cannot hire attorneys to look out for their interests. County attorneys represent them. When the docket says the defendant or The State of Nebraska v. the defendant, the victim's name isn't even listed, but they are there. It is because of that focus that our attention in the legislation gave, county attorneys are becoming aware of their responsibility to victims. Judge Reagan and Judge Jan Gradwohl became attentive and excited about the reality that...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: ...victim witness assistance helps the entire criminal justice procedure, and for the first time the judges' college seminar will be held on this issue.