

SENATOR CONWAY: Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you. This is in the Journal on page 1393. I have two amendments today. The first one would simply add \$250,000 in 125,000 increments in LB 1022. And today I may be in the uncomfortable position of touching on comparisons of victims' programs and I...I regret to be in that position because I have supported all victims of crime, child victims, drunk-driving victims, ever since I came to the Legislature. And I come today with actually no...nothing to protect personally. I have not been a victim. Thank God! My family has not, but I have come through the 14 years in the Legislature to become intimately acquainted with many victims in the State of Nebraska. And I come today seeking appropriation for a program I can't even take credit for. Senator Schmit began the Crime Victims Reparation Program in 1978, one year before I came. But I have tried to improve the original concept of victims' compensation. It started out as a separate agency, spending the entire appropriation on administration costs, not for victims. So I introduced consecutive legislation to tighten up and to see that that money goes, indeed, to the intent that it was originally passed by the Legislature for. We moved it under the Crime Commission. We eliminated the \$100 a day board and last year we allowed the director to become the hearing officer. The federal government also has taken note of victims and in the middle eighties recognized the plight of victims and the fact that they should be compensated by sending back to the states 40 percent of their previous years' appropriation, of the states' appropriation. In other words, the states have to make an effort to serve their victims and the federal government will reinforce that with 40 percent of that effort. Now the federal government gets their money by putting a surcharge on criminals, which is appropriate for victims. I wish we could do that in the State of Nebraska. But, unfortunately, we have tried and have been told that our Constitution would not allow fines, fees or penalties to go to anything other than education. I tried a bill this year to add victims' compensation funding on the income tax form, as a checkoff. I think the people of Nebraska would support that with some amount of their refund dollars. However, the committee killed that bill. We do have it on our income tax form for endangered species but, of course, humans aren't an endangered species, they're just endangered people when they walk on their streets and even in their homes, and no fault of their own, are killed, assaulted and maimed. I have