

March 8, 1988

LB 1042

like to urge you to support this motion of Senator Elmer's. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Moore, please, then Senator Weihing.

SENATOR MOORE: Mr. President, members of the body, I rise almost with a little reluctance here this morning to oppose Senator Elmer's and Senator Barrett's motion to raise LB 1042 from committee. I guess if it...maybe it always takes five votes but I guess most things are pointed at me as a swing vote that voted not to allow Curtis out of the Appropriations Committee. Several people have asked me why and the reasons are many, the first reason being that, to me, it came down to the simple choice between how would I want to spend a few dollars in rural Nebraska. Now I'm not overly happy about the fact that this particular year many of us in rural Nebraska are in some ways forced to fight over the crumbs, but, if I have to fight over the crumbs, I think our money is much better spent on funding for soil and water conservation in the State of Nebraska. I will have a better chance and a better time to explain why I feel that way but the debate today centers around Curtis. And the reason that I could choose soil and water conservation over Curtis stems from a variety of facts, the first fact being that this isn't new. This is not the Legislature's fault. As Senator Abboud has said, and Senator Johnson has said, this has been an ongoing issue that I inherited when I came to this body a few years ago. But another problem that I have inherited, another problem that I must deal with during my tenure in the Legislature is the fact that the State of Nebraska ranks fourth in the nation in the number of higher education employees per capita. We rank fourth in the nation. Now, if we do, as we probably will this year, generate some sizeable increases to the University of Nebraska as well as our state colleges, not only will we have some of the highest number of faculties per capita, we will also have some of the highest paid faculty in the region and I don't think it's fair that the taxpayers of Nebraska have to do that. I have said, during my campaign, I have said during my short tenure in the Legislature that it's time in the state that we get our higher education house in order. And Vard Johnson was absolutely correct, this body very, very, very seldom has the backbone to make a decision to close something. Now, I don't relish the fact that in this case we're closing a program that is very near and dear to my neighbors and very near and dear to my