

with Ronald Roskens' termination. I've introduced bills, other people have introduced bills. Last year I introduced a bill to strengthen the Coordinating Commission. And the reason I introduced that bill, you can go back to the transcript and see I sat there and said, you know, Nebraska pays...is in the top five, nationally, what we spend per capita on higher education. We spend a lot of money. But how do we spend the money? We load up a sawed off shotgun and have a pattern that wide. We don't know what we're spending it on. There is no coordination out there. We don't know anything in the Legislature. We hear from all these people, we don't know what's going on. We need to have a bullet approach, we need to figure out some better coordination on these campuses, figure out where we're going in higher education, and spend our money wisely. LR 239 by itself doesn't appropriate more money, no, it doesn't do that. But it will lead to a better idea of how we're spending our money, so people like me will be more convinced that we're getting a bang for our buck, because now I don't think we are. Our present system, it is flawed, not because they fired Ronald Roskens, not because some members of the Legislature have had disagreements with Nancy Hoch, this precedes that by a long ways. And it's unfair to sit here and make an accusation that I or Senator Withem or Senator Warner are behind this because we want to get even. This is an argument that has been going on for a number of years, and it finally came to a head. I think it's high time, I think it's high time for a change in higher education so we can go to the voters of the state and the taxpayers of the state and, once and for all, say, we're going to try to get some bang for our buck in the dollars we spend for higher education, because now we get a slight fizzle because we don't know where it's going and have no direction on how we're spending the money. I sympathize with Senator McFarland and Senator Crosby. They hear from their constituents, primarily in Lincoln, that they don't want anything to change. Well, I hear from constituents across the state and there are problems, there are some big problems. Does 239 solve all them? No, it probably doesn't. But yet it attempts to restructure some things, and it's my hope that then we can move forward and go to the taxpayers and say, are we getting some money, are we getting some bang for our buck? Yes, we are. So, with that, I urge the advancement of LR 239.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Withem, followed by Senator Schimek and Senator Warner. Senator Withem.