

the bracket motion, and to urge us to take some action on this issue. We have an opportunity, I think, in this session to maybe earn a little bit of the money that the taxpayers are sending us down here to earn and, frankly, if we were paid on productivity lately, we owe the state money. We haven't done much, and it is about time that we took on some issues. I don't think my constituents sent me down here to wrangle over issues that can't be solved. In fact, I remember that that was brought up at a number of town hall meetings last fall and, frankly, I missed my prediction. I said, no, nobody will come down here and try to do the impossible. They all are going to realize that it is probably a lose/lose situation to filibuster and argue on an issue that the public hasn't made up its mind on and the courts are dealing with, and yet we have allowed ourselves to be distracted from a lot of other issues that I really firmly believe that if we had a survey of our constituents right now, they would tell us to get to work and do what you can, and don't try to solve the unsolvable at this point. The other point that I would make, I guess in terms of my support for 239, and I have said this before, I started out pretty skeptical of this whole process. I was concerned about what the various maneuvers might turn out to be that might, in fact, make access to higher education worse across the state rather than better, and that it might throw the power of the entire institution into one institution rather than meeting the needs that people all across the state tell us that they have. And I have come away from participating in the hearings feeling pretty comfortable with where we are and I see some real opportunities here to solve some problems that I think most of us are aware exist in higher education. I have, perhaps, been more closely involved in higher ed than some of you having been on the staff of one of the state colleges and paid, perhaps, a little bit more attention to some of the things about that system that frustrated as a member of the Appropriations Committee. But I think this is the best opportunity we have had in years to take on some of the kinds of issues that concern us in terms of access, offering people across the state opportunities to get programs that they don't have the opportunity to get now, and that have bogged down in this body when we have tried to change that. It is also an opportunity to make sure we spend what money we have, that we are already spending, which is a significant amount, that has already been pointed out, on higher ed, it is an opportunity to make sure that we spend that well, and I think it is also a realization that you just can't keep buying more of everything, as Senator Warner I think was trying