

PRESIDENT: Senator Labeledz, will you respond, please?

SENATOR LABEDZ: Yes, Senator Cope.

SENATOR COPE: Senator Labeledz, as the bill is amended now, is this in any way going to be more competitive with private enterprise...the contractors, the builders that are paying taxes to the state of Nebraska?

SENATOR LABEDZ: Well, I believe the engineering con...as I said before, what we're trying to do in LB 38 is just the planning and design. Senator Schmit's amendment went into the construction work. Up until before they could use public work employees of the state up to forty thousand dollars. He's raising that to fifty thousand dollars, but the planning and design, LB 38 raises it to a hundred thousand. We employ over a hundred architects and engineers for the state of Nebraska. They're in-house employees and are perfectly capable of doing the planning and design for contracts up to a hundred thousand. As far as construction work, I checked with agencies and there is no agencies that feels that they have employees that could do construction work for more than a fifty thousand dollar contract. So that's why we're leaving that at fifty thousand, but the planning and design at a hundred thousand.

SENATOR COPE: Will these agencies put on more employees though to do this design is what bothers me?

SENATOR LABEDZ: No, I'm sure they wouldn't because as I said, there's not very many agencies that will be able to do that other than Department of Roads and the Games and Parks. The University already does it up to a hundred thousand. They established their own policy, and their public works construction up to fifty thousand. They've been doing that for a few years now. I don't think that it's going to require any additional employees. I think if you read the fiscal note that came from the fiscal analyst, he said that there would not be any required new employees.

SENATOR COPE: Well, the reason for me asking that question, Senator Labeledz, is that on the 309 maintenance bill, the University of Nebraska did not have sufficient staff to take on the projects for the additional maintenance, that they had to hire staff to do this, or at least the charge back to the 309 money, and that's the part that bothers me, whether we are just adding more staff, or they are hiring additional people.

SENATOR LABEDZ: No, I'm almost sure, Senator Cope, that