

people involved is quite small that would take advantage of this program. My suspicion is the number of people that would change because of it being free versus paying an auditing fee would be extremely small. So I will agree that we probably are not talking about an issue of major financial significance. But I don't think that's quite as important an issue as Senator Landis has said, it's a philosophy here that we are granting to a group based on a relatively arbitrary issue, that of being a certain age. We have a lot of groups in our society that are a group based on something that is a common denominator and my question would be, if we do this to this group, being 60 years old or older, why should we not allow this to be available to other groups, groups such as the veterans, regardless of where they served, groups that have handicaps, groups of women who are considered in some cases minorities or their rights have been suppressed, minority groups of all kinds of ethnic backgrounds and such? I am concerned with the philosophical issue, realizing it's not a major significant financial thing, although most of you are aware that higher education is under-funded in this state. We have significant plant and facility deficiencies. We have significant deficiencies in our student to faculty ratios. We have deficiencies in the facilities themselves with regard to parking, for example, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, which has been a major issue ever since I attended that university and I'm just about able to be qualified for this new bill. These are real issues. I realize that it's a laudable goal. It's a nice statement to make to show reverence to this class, but without having some kind of need-based program involved by saying, I would like to do this, I can't afford it, without having some kind of provision in that, I am afraid I cannot support the bill.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Hefner, please, then Senator McFarland.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I wasn't going to talk on this bill but since my name was mentioned by my good friend, Senator Lamb, I thought I should defend myself. And, Senator McFarland, thanks for trying to help me, but, no thanks, too. I see in the paper the other day where Senator McFarland and I were getting a little closer together. Our thoughts were beginning to blend a little more. But I, too, have reservations about this bill. Why do we need to keep helping the senior citizens more than we help some other people? And I guess, by the definition, I'm a senior citizen and I