

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I think that I can probably respond to a good share of those. First place is, and I think the Education Department was probably supportive of it, and I don't know whether Senator Withem was here when it was even started. I patterned this after the math and science program that was to address the shortage of math teachers. I don't know whether the perceived shortage was there or not but I will tell you that it didn't even touch the surface when the shortage of nurses that we are speaking today. I know Senator Withem had some problems with the bill. I tried to, when you work with all of the nursing professions, I will guarantee you there is a lot of little technical things that you have to address. First place, his statement that \$500 doesn't mean anything. That is not true. An LPN program, the tuition is approximately \$1,600 at the technical schools. Sure, I didn't have it after...I had it after the fact. The problem of student loans, students taking loans, going to school a few months, dropping out, then we have that problem of the loan, and what do you do with that, and that is purposely designed that way. It is purposely designed that when they go out into the rural areas to nurse, and the extended credit program, it couldn't be better on the rural area. So it was purposely designed this way. Pat Snyder of the home-health care, the nursing home, said you are not correct in that respect, that it doesn't help. They had a simple \$250 scholarship. They had over 100 applicants. Nearly every one of these, when we talk about need-base, there are other incentives that the nurses can get. It simply is to entice them into the nursing field, let them study for a year, and then decide if this is exactly what I want to do so that we are not wasting money, so that we know what we are doing, and it is need. Most people, I rather hate to say this, but I suppose if they came from a family of very high income that did not need any assistance and help, they probably would not choose the nursing profession. They would go on to other professions, and the nursing is usually that very caring person, that person that has grown up and sees the need for it. I visited and I put this bill together, Pat Perry of Bishop Clarkson in Omaha, Dr. Rosalee Yeaworth, Dr. Joe Preusser, the community colleges. Loans are not what the girls need. We found that out in LB 1185 last year, and, in fact, actually the LB 890 report, and I am not going to belabor that. One of the parts is, if Nebraska had an average student grant program for its students of the average size of other state grant programs adjusted for Nebraska's enrollment, the grant