

SENATOR WITHEM: Yeah, Mr. Speaker, I was going to waive and close, but there are about three points I'd like to make at this time. Number one, Senator Nelson, I'd like you to know I personally resent your characterization on the floor that I was unfair at the hearing for this bill, and I want that in the record. I have not at any time made any personal characterizations about you or the bill you're bringing in. I'm attempting to deal with the facts of the issue. I resent that characterization. If you recall, that day we laid out ahead of time how long we were going to take on each bill. You took half an hour to introduce the bill, that is your fault, not mine. I want that in the record. Secondly, Senator Smith talks about facts. She talks about the fact that there is a nursing shortage. Had she been listening, I'm sure she was but she may have forgotten, to my introduction. I granted all of the facts. I granted that Senator Nelson, Senator Smith, others that have worked on this problem have identified a real problem. My question of the bill was, will this bill solve that problem? Will it affect that problem? Will it improve that problem? In all of this testimony in the committee and here on the floor today, we have not heard of one example, of one student that would have made a career choice any different than what they are making now had they been told that they got \$500 at the end of a year of study. Bring in those people and maybe you'll convince me otherwise. Bring in two or 300 students that have said that would have made a difference. Nobody has convinced me yet that there is that difference. Third, facts, Senator Nelson says this bill is based on the math and science programs. Senator Nelson, the math and science program is a loan forgiveness program. It is not an after the fact grant. A student can get a \$500 per semester loan, it is then forgiven in \$500 increments for teaching math and science in our state. Again, another thing that hasn't been brought up, the \$500 is given to a person for studying in our state. Somebody jokingly said, I think they were joking, that what they might do with that \$500 is buy an airplane ticket to some other part of the nation in order to apply for a job. It is not based on the math and science loan forgiveness program. With that, thank you very much.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Schimek, please.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I would like to rise in support of this bill and I'd like to just go to my own personal experience. When I was a child in elementary