

I have a report of Registered Lobbyists, Mr. President, for this past week. And that's all that I have. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Kristensen, please, followed by Senator Wesely, followed by Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Kristensen, please.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members, it's a pleasure to stand here before you this morning and speak about the issue of Kearney and about the issue of a study and we're going to probably get to those yet this morning more specifically. But what I want to speak about at the present time is Senator Withem's amendment. And Senator Withem's amendment really wasn't an idea of bringing Kearney into the university when it started. It had a very good goal and that was to study higher education. And as this issue has evolved about where are we going to go with higher education in this state, the Kearney issue seemed to naturally flow into that. That's something we logically want to discuss. That's something we want to look at and ultimately want to do because, as you will hear later today when we present some of the issues about Kearney, why there is a compelling need to bring it into the university system. But I rise this morning at this time to support the Withem amendment. It's a carefully drawn amendment. It's one that puts the study into a perspective of two phases. You know, so often we sit here and we talk about claims and we talk about legal meanings and we do all these sorts of things that are very, very specific. Here we have a chance to talk about the direction of higher education and we could sit and just have a study and that study could do a variety of things. It could talk about how to have a higher quality of education. Senator Withem's amendment gives us some direction, it gives us some very specific things to do. And I would oppose the Scofield amendment to that simply because we need to have a direction to go, a very good direction to go and that's one of two phases. Let's study what ought to be done and then how to do it. That will fit very nicely into a discussion later this morning about what do we do with Kearney and how does that direction fit. The issue right now isn't do we put Kearney in with the Scofield amendment. I would ask you to support the Withem amendment and let's get on and talk about the real issues and where we're going to go with higher education in the state.

PRESIDENT: Senator Wesely, please, followed by Senator Bernard-Stevens.