

still going to have to narrow it more. But the point I'm trying to make right now is if you don't at least head out generally in the right direction, you aren't ever going to get there, folks, you aren't ever going to get at the kinds of questions you want to address. I am more than willing to address the constitutional questions that have been raised by Kearney. They are legitimate questions. We can't do a thing, frankly, until we resolve those and I think we will...once we head in the right direction first, then I'm suggesting then let's work on language to make sure that within this study we get those answers and that we get them soon. I agree with Senator Warner, there isn't any sense delaying that because otherwise we're just going to muddle around and study stuff and we aren't going to get anywhere. But I'm suggesting to you that if you accept my amendment, we have at least started at a proper starting point. If we don't do this, then the study appears to me to be driven only by the Kearney question and everything else will get lost in the haze. I have expressed my concern before about the likelihood of a consultant coming in for \$250,000 and being able to address those questions and also address the broader issues that are addressed in the Withem amendment. And so I think we first have got to at least head this ship in the right direction before we can get anywhere else. I'm going to later raise issues as well as far as...there isn't any opportunity much here for the general public outside of our roles as elected officials to be heard. I think that's improper, given the importance of higher education and I will be bringing further amendments on that. I would like to address, at some point, how a planning process works and I don't think I've got time to do it right now. But if we do the strategic plan that I am proposing, then there are a number of steps that you need to outline to assist a consultant in making sure that that's a time efficient process, that it is inclusive enough to address statewide concerns and at the same time it draws on the kind of expertise that we have. I would suggest as well that we would look at some other...some other states in what they're doing. I mentioned Wyoming. West Virginia recently completed a study that I think is similar to what is being contemplated here and, surprisingly enough, they suggested they ought to create yet another system rather than combine them. And so you have to be aware that if we don't direct this in a certain way, I guess I don't know if I want to turn a consultant loose and say, go out and take a look at the universe of higher education and tell me what to do. But I would suggest that if we took a look at back at the early role and mission statements that Senator Warner and I have both