

state needs to be moving and how fundamental to that vision is our higher education system, that I feel this study is absolutely integral to perhaps our future destiny, that perhaps this whole discussion, prompted by the Kearney issue but, hopefully, in a much broader context is, in fact, a discussion about our future and our destiny as a state, and perhaps as a nation. That's why I suggest the sort of issues that are raised by Senator Withem's amendment are so fundamental for us to take the time and realize the situation. I, frankly, don't have amendments or suggestions as to how to improve the Withem amendment.

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: He starts off, I think, in the right direction in trying to change a bit of the membership of the committee, trying to give more focus to it. I simply disagree with the priorities and the sense of phasing of this issue. But I certainly think we need to understand the broader context, the economic implications, the understanding of what kind of competition we're in today in terms of our economic future. I also think generally in terms of that economic future I see a couple of very basic fundamental issues that we have to decide, and that's why I think we need to look first at the overall system. Number one, there is the idea of higher education reaching out across the state and educating, enhancing, empowering our people, and that is really where the Kearney State issue comes into and where they've been aggressive in reaching out across the state. But the other side of education is its excellence, its ability to do research, its ability to have the very best scholars teaching our very best students, so that they will be the best not only in our state and our nation, but around the world. And that excellence question is the one I don't think we address unless we do a broader study first and look at Kearney State second. And the time... (recorder malfunction) ...take that effort and do it... (recorder malfunction).

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Moore, followed by Senator Scofield and Senator Crosby.

SENATOR MOORE: Question.

PRESIDENT: Question has been called. Do I see five hands? I do. The question is, shall debate cease? All those in favor