

..SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion on the Wesely amendment, Senator Withem, followed by Senator Warner.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I would like to...Senator Wesely raised some very interesting good points. His first question was, why don't we include the other three colleges? The simple, rather smug answer I guess is they don't want to go, Don. Kearney wants to, these three don't. So that would be frankly rationale enough, not to be supportive of this amendment. What is the rationale for Kearney and not the others, I think is another good question. Oftentimes we wonder if any one private citizen showing up at hearings ever makes a difference in the way the Legislature acts and votes. In the case of this particular issue, it did, in my case anyway. As I was sitting through a very lengthy, difficult hearing one of the very last people to get up and I had, frankly, not made up my mind on what I thought the ultimate place for Kearney State College is prior to that time. There was a lone college professor from Kearney who got up and I think he was testifying in opposition to Senator Scofield's bill. He really didn't even comment on LB 160, his remarks were on LB 760. He went through a history of things that had changed at the state college system. And I can't recount all of the specific examples that he used, but he went back to the days of the creation of the four institutions, their governance from the State Normal Board at one time, the fact that they were Normal Schools, their change to State Teachers Colleges, their change to state colleges, their increase in role and mission, the inclusion of a masters degree of business at those institutions, the creation of graduate programs, all those things. And he said, and I didn't go back to test whether he was accurate on the record or not, but I trusted him that he was accurate. He said every one of these changes that has taken place has been because Kearney has reached a point in its evolution that it needed these changes and politically the only way in which we could institute those changes at Kearney was to bring along the other three institutions, even though they may not necessarily been able to prove the case that they were ready themselves. If you'd adopt the Wesely amendment, you'd be following that logic, that Kearney has made its case, made its case fairly convincingly to the Legislature as demonstrated by that last vote that they are ready for this change. You'd be saying, yeah, we're going to make this change for the other three even though they haven't made the case. As a matter of fact, in this case they don't