

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I'm slow but I learn quickly sometimes. But I think I will be happy today still regardless of what happens on the vote. I have faith in the legislative process no matter which way it seems to go. I would...I would like to reemphasize to the body that Senator Hannibal is right, many people within the body over the years working with DED in the State of Nebraska have been less than satisfied and we have gone from having many branch offices to within other administrations having no branch offices to having a request for four branch offices and then back down to zero within the Appropriations Committee and there has been a lot of dissatisfaction and a lot of, I think, fluidity as the term that Senator Hannibal used. And that is true, but I would hope the members of the body would not...would not put that particular argument as a reason why not to support this amendment. There are many things happened within DED that have been positive. There's a restructuring that's going through, another bill came through the Government Committee that will be going through this Legislature that will do a lot more positive things and so on. But that's not my argument. My argument is in the State of Nebraska we have companies, small companies, and I know people on the body talked about 775 that, you know, and LB 280 years ago that you could not help sometimes a small company because they just wasn't worth it. This is an area in central and western Nebraska that a large company or a small company can go to the Procurement Office and say, I know there is some money within the federal government, if I can just get in the bidding process, I would like to get one of these federal contracts. What do I do? And the Procurement Office has the people in place now. They have been working at it. They have been working with companies throughout western and central Nebraska in order to help them gain these contracts. And we have gained over \$10 million in federal contracts, \$10 million that would have gone elsewhere, so we would have had \$10 million worth of people unemployed; ten million dollars worth and you multiply that by the multiplier or the changeover that would have left our state. It's been a very valuable economic gain to this state. And what we have is a Department of Defense confusion with a new administration. Senator Hannibal says that we have a little bit of confusion the last minute. It's not last minute confusion here, it's confusion at the upper level in what to do with the new administration after a few hundred days and the confusion there is finally getting down to here. And it just