

unfortunately hits us right at the budgetary times and I can't delay that, I have got a call in to George Bush tonight and we'll see if we can get it worked out. But, nonetheless, at this point we can't seem to get that confusion relayed or stopped. What we have is the Department of Defense who said they were going to reduce our funding to the point that we could not fund the western Procurement Office. And the Appropriations Committee rightfully said, well, we're not going to start replacing federal funds that is lost, and that's correct, we shouldn't. But, members of the body, this is the change, this is the change, the federal government now has said, we're not going to do that. They're taking the Board of Regents approach to Kearney positions. They say, now what we're going to do...and this is final, now what we're going to do is just have a pool of funds of which states like Nebraska in a group can compete and we very well may get our funding to continue this good economic program that we have in the State of Nebraska. By the way, this is not a new program, this is an established program that has a track record, that has been successful. The problem will arise that we will not know the nature of the federal funds until after this appropriation process is finished. So, in essence,...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...the department...the Procurement Office will have to close. And then if we receive the federal funds, then we'd have to decide if we were going to open but it would depend on how many dollars we received from the federal level. But, at this point, it would not be able to open yet because the Appropriations Committee has not appropriated the initial part that was would match the 25,000 we could get from DOD to keep it open for the next two years. So, in essence, what you would have is a closing of a program that is working very well economically for the State of Nebraska and small businesses. This amendment takes a very reasonable approach. It's not asking for 500, a million, 5 million, is not asking for that. We're asking for \$25,242. And this will simply say that it will be enough money to fund them throughout this fiscal year and we will find out, as the State of Nebraska, will they receive the money that they're going to bid for from the Department of Defense. If they do, they will use that money to carry out for the rest of the biennium.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Time.