

I think it's the right thing to do. But the real purpose of 247 is to have us, as a Legislature, get a handle on higher education in our state. I don't think we have that handle today. We have a Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska system, and if you needed any evidence of their ability to handle issues like this, just get out your news clippings of the way they've reacted to this particular issue in the last couple of months, it has not been a particularly pleasant example of policymaking at its very best. We don't do a very good job of coordinating higher education, we don't get the best bang for our buck. We don't have a vision of what higher education should be for our state. And that is what LB 247 is all about, that's why I chose it as my priority bill. And that is why...the reason I put my light on wasn't so much to make those statements, I just felt the need to respond a little bit to Senator Wesely's comments. The reason I put my light on is to talk about a procedural item. This bill has the E clause on it. It is vitally necessary, if we are to do the work called for in this study, that it pass with 33 votes. If you want a decent study, a decent strategic plan for higher education in this state, and you support 247's approach to that, you've got to vote for it with the E clause. The bill, we are on a very fast track with this. This is one of the changes we made in the bill on General File, is, rather than doing a two-year study, we are doing a phased in study. By December 15, 1989, we have to have completed phase one of this study. If the bill...By 45 days after the effective date of this bill, according to the language of the bill, we have to have hired a contractor to do the study. It's going to be a tight frame if July 1 is the date that the contractor comes on board and the contractor has very few months to do the study. If we wait until September, if we wait until September to do the...to have the bill go into effect, hire the contractor in October, we're not going to get any type of study done at all. So it is very important that this bill pass with the E clause. If you don't like Kearney, but like the study, I suggest you make that known publicly, if you want to, but vote in favor of the bill with the E clause because it's vitally important that it happen. With that, I'd like to give the remainder of my time to Senator Barrett.

SENATOR BARRETT: Thank you, Senator Withem. Mr. President and members, just one very quick word. I liked what Senator Withem said about the real focus of this bill. LB 247 is a bill to coordinate higher education.