

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Right, I guess the question I want to try and clarify and have you clarify for the body in the record is, in the committee there was some discussion of, yes, the tremendous need to help entrepreneurial enterprises, particularly in western Nebraska and rural areas, and that there was no disagreement. But what about the area that there could be some competition between one company already established and another one that is under the incubator program, one that is obviously receiving aid and...aid from the community and from the state government where the other, competing on their own is not? There was some discussion about unfair competition, in fact, and 18 months or two years may be too long of time to keep them in the incubator, and I just wanted you to respond to that type of discussion that we had earlier so we can have that on the record.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Certainly. We did build some safeguards into the bill to prevent that competition that you refer to, or against and for businesses already in the community. I think Section 9 in the committee amendments would speak to that, Senator, listing the criteria that the community board looks at to decide who will be accepted as a tenant into the business incubator. It requires that the product or service be new to the state or to the community and that it will not eliminate existing jobs. There is some local control built into the bill because the community board asks for the incubator and it decides who the tenants will be. So I have no problem with that anymore and that was a good point that was brought out by the committee.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: And I thank Senator Barrett for working on that point to extend it to two years. I'd also like to make sure the body understands that after the two-year period there is a 12-month possibility of an extension to give the business that has been under the incubator program a transition period in order to break out on their own. The committee can, in fact, extend that to 12 months if they deem that desirable, and I thank the Chair for the time and that ends my remarks and hope the bill moves on to Select File.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you. Senator Barrett, you're recognized to close on the Barrett amendment. There are no other lights on the bill itself. We'll proceed now to the closing on the amendment. Senator Barrett.