

Education Committee. There was no opposition at the hearing. There were some technical amendments that were committee amendments. Those committee amendments have been incorporated into the amendment to LB 143 and became part of the amendment. I think what I need to...I will try and explain the amendment and how it works, and I will talk a little bit about the background, first of all. I think that the technical community colleges last year got a very clear message from both the Governor's Office and also from Senator Warner saying that we need to do something about the funding in technical community colleges or there may have to be some moves to put the technical community colleges under the auspices of the state. So the technical community colleges over the summer had some long and hard negotiating sessions, and finally came back with a bill that would provide for some equalization aid to try and equalize the funding between some of the different technical community college areas. The way that the amendment works and the way that the funding would work is that any...as we put new funds into community colleges, there are no funds associated with this bill. All this bill does is set in place a mechanism for a different distribution of the funds that go into the community college system. It was also brought out at the hearing that the 247 study on higher education is looking at this method of distributing funds also. They are looking at this and saying, is this the way we ought to do it? And if that 247 study comes forward and says, no, this probably isn't the way you do it, you ought to do it a different way, I will be back with a bill next year to clean this up and make sure that we do it in the method that the 247 people are talking about because they are looking at this also, but I think we need to get this in place this year. I think it's what we need to do because it comes a more long-term solution to the problem. Otherwise, what we have is the community colleges, especially from the western area, coming in every couple of years wanting either an increase in their taxing authority or needing more money to bail them out. So this is going to provide for some funding and it is going to be very direct. There is no doubt about that and I know there has been some question as to why the formula is based on the levy, and the formula is based on the levy, I think, because that was the easiest method to target the money. And I can tell you very frankly that the money would be targeted mostly to Western Nebraska Community College. There would also be some of the money that would go to Mid-Plains under the present formula. The way the formula works is that each of the community colleges would send the figures in showing their tax levy and showing the