

the west at Scottsbluff and North Platte. This...addressing this and passing this bill would do much to put a barrier with regards to the class action suit. You must realize that if that suit is won, and it likely will be, that it is possible for those community colleges which we're taxing above the nine percent...nine cent level, would perhaps have to refund to the citizens of those areas which would be a very costly...that could go up into, actually into the millions, and they would be back to the Legislature. So it is...this is a bill to bring about the equalization so that the class...to nullify the class suit action. And I ask that the body move the bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Scofield, did you wish to speak?

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President. Only very briefly to...Senator Weihing has adequately, more than adequately covered the problem facing the community colleges here. This is an essential piece of legislation brought about by that lawsuit that Senator Weihing alluded to. It seems to me that to oppose this right now simply ensures that we create a crisis and probably would be more costly to the taxpayer down the road. It is appropriate. I think that Senator Moore has essentially waved a warning flag, saying we probably ought to look at the entire financing of our community college system. It is far from a strong...far from being as strong as I would like it or I think anybody would like it. And that is certainly something that we should all have on the top of our agenda out there. We're probably not going to get to it this year but we're going to have some major discussions about higher education and I would urge that we not forget about the technical community college system in those discussions. It's critical that we keep in mind where we are on this whole financing picture. But I would urge you to join Senator Weihing in advancing this bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Weihing, did you wish to close?

SENATOR WEIHING: I just ask that we go ahead and vote on the issue.

PRESIDENT: The question is the advancement of the bill. All in favor say aye. Opposed nay. It is advanced. LB 1004, please.

CLERK: Mr. President, 1004, I have E & R amendments, first of