

year but you've got to look at this as an investment in trying to bring back investment opportunities to Nebraska and to our businesses. And this is not a farmers' bill. This is a bill designed to help all of the industries and all of the people of Nebraska equally and, quite frankly, I think it's an area that we should be aggressively involved in and all we do by not participating is miss opportunities that could present themselves to us for our state. So I strongly urge the Legislature to advance this bill today.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Wesely, please, followed by Senator Nelson and Senator Baack.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members, I would rise in support of this legislation as well and indicate that I have discussed with Senator Johnson the provisions of the bill. I, too, introduced a bill on foreign trade assistance, LB 1088, the Foreign and Domestic Trade Assistance Act, and I know Senator Brad Ashford had legislation as well before the Banking and Commerce Committee. We did consider those pieces of legislation and advanced 1088. The thought is to work with Senator Johnson and Senator Ashford and see about merging those concepts together, perhaps on Select File, and I think that would be appropriate. But certainly we're all headed in the same direction, that our state is one of the last to recognize the need to provide assistance for foreign trade exporting and also to recognize that our role as a state is to assist the business community in this endeavor. I recently had the opportunity as a representative of the National Conference of State Legislatures to travel to Japan as a part of a delegation over there. There I met with a number of individuals and particularly met with the state office representatives of the 40 some states that have offices in Japan. I was a little embarrassed to tell them about the initiatives in Nebraska which are next to nothing. There is but one full-time staff person dealing with export assistance and another staff person in DED looking at perhaps assisting some investment in the state. That perhaps is the least strenuous effort of any state in the country to get into this issue and at a time at which we all recognize the world is becoming smaller, much closer to us, that we have the changes in eastern Europe, we have the changes in the Pacific rim, we have around us a world economy that is open to us and available to us if only we will recognize the opportunity that we have it. We did have for a short time an office in Germany. It was a failure and I think part of the reason is we didn't have the