

SPEAKER BARRETT: Debate ceases. Senator Johnson, would you care to close?

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, several senators would like parts of my closing, so I am going to try and divvy it out as best I can. But I'd like to thank all of the senators who have commented on the bill and I think they have hit upon the main points of this issue. The key, I think, is, one, adequate funding and long-term funding, not a short-term commitment this year and then next year we'll think about it. It has to be something that we're going to make a long-term commitment to. Number two, we have to give it, this office and this division, clear direction on what we want them to do and we can't ask them to do too much in a short period of time. We may have to focus on export enhancement. We may have to focus only on reverse investments or we may have to only focus on trade or tourism as a part of this office, but the clear message is that we've got to give them a role and mission that they can follow, clear direction back here at home and what their role and mission is wherever they may locate this particular office. I guess we can pass all of the LB 775s and 270s that we'd like, but unless we start developing new opportunities for our companies, it's going to be difficult to sustain economic growth in this state and I'm not criticizing 775 because I voted for it, but I'm saying that there are other opportunities out there that we should be involved in and this office would help us get involved in that. And, lastly, I'd just say this is not an attempt to duplicate programs that are already being done and I know Senator Coordsen and I have talked to some other folks with the checkoff boards who are somewhat concerned that we're treading on their soil and that is not the case at all. I'm trying to make sure this program is designed to give opportunity for all facets of our industrial base, not just agriculture or not just major corporations, but I see this bill really benefitting the smaller, mid-sized business person or company that does not have a division within their company that works on export opportunities. I have promised Senator Weihing, Senator Coordsen and Senator Conway each some time, so I'll start maybe by recognizing Senator Weihing and then go to Senator Coordsen, then Senator Conway.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Weihing.

SENATOR WEIHING: Thank you. I just simply want to commend the speakers on this bill. They have done a superb job. I will not