

because when you have the automobile, it takes you a day to come here, you are here a day, takes you a day to go back. Where an individual spends maybe one-half day here in Lincoln attending some functions and it's complete, it is three days and at a minimum cost of \$300 to \$400 for someone in the west. Therefore, we must maintain our linkage, we must maintain...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR WEIHING: ...the excellent transportation and rapid transportation between western and eastern. It is vital to the social, the educational, governmental entities of our society throughout the state. I support LB 84 (sic), and I hope that you move it along.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Baack, followed by Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. I rise in support of 1184. I know that...I've received a couple of notes saying that I need to declare a conflict of interest on this. But I probably use the essential air service in Nebraska as much as anyone. And I know that with GP Express I'm probably their best customer, because I fly back and forth at least 20 to 25 times a year. So,...and I think it's something that we need to keep in place, because we talk about economic development a lot in here, and how we're going to keep our rural areas going in this state, and I think there is only one way we can do that, and that is we have to provide the proper kind of transportation system to attract industry into these areas. If you do not have the proper transportation systems, companies do not want to look at your area. When companies come into an area, such as Scottsbluff, if they cannot move their executives in and out rather easily, especially through air travel, they are not going to look at Scottsbluff very carefully. I also would like to relate to you a little story that I had. A year ago USA Today sent a reporter out to do a story on essential air service in Nebraska, because there was some debate going on in Congress. They sent a reporter out there, and this reporter rode with me from Scottsbluff to Grand Island. He was not real impressed with the airplane. He was used to flying on the big jets, and in fact he got a little bit ill as we flew down to Grand Island. But we had a good conversation on the way, and that's the thing that I tried to emphasize to him is that, when we talk about essential air service, for serving western Nebraska, we are not