

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I've not spoken and I probably shouldn't. But I've listened to the comments this morning, and most of them have related to how...what a wonderful guy Norm Thorson is, what a well-qualified individual he is. But, you know, there is something wrong. There are sufficiencies within the compact. There are sufficiencies within our state law, which have nothing to do with Norm Thorson being confirmed here today. There is a bill coming up that we can do a knock down, drag out fight the rest of the session on, LB 1238, which Senator Cap Dierks has selected for his priority bill. We want to talk about the things that Senator McFarland and Senator Morrissey and others want to talk about, amendments to that bill. We can fight about that all the rest of the session, if we want to. But I don't see...I agree with Senator Scofield when she mentioned or made the comment, the fight here is really not the pilot, it's what flight instructions we're going to give our pilot. And I think the important thing now is that we make a decision on whether we want to select this pilot or not, and move on, and then begin the fight over where we're going to land this ship, whether it's 1238 or some other bill that was heard by the Natural Resources Committee. I've sat through most of those hearings, and they are very intense, bitter disagreements over how we got in this problem. But I'm not so worried about how we got in the problem, but how we're going to resolve the problem, I think is the question we have to ask ourselves, and I think maybe 1238 is not the absolute answer, but at least we can start the debate. But we're fighting an issue here that I think is irrelevant. The relevancy here is whether we agree that Norm Thorson is a qualified individual who can represent the State of Nebraska, and I've been voting yes that I think he is. So I would, again, ask that the body confirm Mr. Thorson and we move on.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Landis, please, followed by Senator Smith.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I want to explain my position and also give some sense of where I think the debate should go following this controversy. I voted against the bracketing. Although I did vote to rerefer, as blunt a tool as that was, I will vote for this appointment. We are choosing today our negotiator, if you will, and I see nothing in the record that says he could not do that job well. What's absent from the record, however, is what instructions we will give our negotiator, what level of authority, what demands