

that prevailed. I believe there was another amendment that was considered, failed.

PRESIDENT: Perhaps what we should do, Senator Withem, would you like to bring us up to date on the bill with the amendments as it sits now? Would you like to do that, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes. I will be as brief as I can, Mr. President. I appreciate the opportunity to do this. LR 239CA is a proposed amendment to the Constitution that will implement the report from Widmayer and Associates who did the review of Nebraska's higher education system. I might add that the recommendations were somewhat altered, amended, and then adopted unanimously by the Commission on Higher Education that was appointed by the Governor and by the Legislative Executive Board to oversee the study. The recommendations, basically, very briefly, they create a new Commission on Higher Education to serve as a forum for higher education issues. They create a Board of Regents over the seven senior level campuses that will have coordination authority over those campuses, being able to enforce role and mission course offerings, program offering types of decisions, something we do not have now that has any teeth to it, and it would create on the individual campus level boards of trustees that would provide the governance for the specific institution. On Friday, late in the afternoon, we took up the committee amendments. We considered a Warner amendment to the committee amendments dealing with the student vote issue. I think the debate, for one reason or another, got a little bit off target. The Warner amendment, in no way, shape or form, took away from the bill the ability for the people to vote on whether they want voting student trustee membership on these individual campus boards of trustees. What the Warner amendment did is it separated that out as a separate issue for the voters to vote on as opposed to it being integrated within the full...the full amendment. Somehow the debate got off on should students have the right to vote or should they not have the right to vote. If the Legislature endorses the committee amendments and LR 239CA as it is currently drafted, the citizens of the state will have an opportunity to decide whether they want the students to be voting members of these boards of trustees. So the Warner amendment did not strike that from the committee amendments, it merely separated it and allowed it to be considered separately. That is, Mr. President, my recollection of the pertinent facts around the bill and its progress to this point.