

research university to have a truly statewide presence. Without the Medical Center, an NU presence in Omaha would be absent for all practical purposes. There would be an ever-increasing tendency for the citizens of the state's largest city and the leaders of the state's largest corporation to think of UN-O and UNMC as their university and not think of UN-L as a statewide resource that is charged to serve their needs. It further continues, freestanding medical universities are somewhat uncommon in the United States, and a clear preference has been shown for maintaining structural relationships with a comprehensive research university. The great majority of the freestanding medical universities/schools have failed to achieve reputations of quality and distinction. While 55 miles separate the two campuses, modern telecommunications and improved commuting times make this distance seem far less today than it has actually been for most of the last 88 years since the University of Nebraska College of Medicine was established. A separate president and board for the Medical Center would not even have been proposed if UNMC physical plant were in or near the City of Lincoln, and this is a point I made earlier, so why, in this age of instant communications, should 55 miles become the basis of a separate structure? We have the University of Nebraska Law School. We have the Dental School. We even talked about the Nursing School. They are a part of UN-L and would be under the same board of trustees. I think it is appropriate that the...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR McFARLAND: ...University of Nebraska Med Center also come under one board of trustees and it is such an important concept and such a necessary concept that I believe it should be part of the constitutional amendment rather than a part of some kind of statutory provision that would be subject to change in future years at the whim of the Legislature. This is an important area that should be approved by the people of Nebraska. This should be included as part of that amendment and then if there is any change made in the future, it should be done with the approval of the people of the State of Nebraska. It should not be just a part of a statutory structure, it should be a part of the constitutional structure of the State of Nebraska, not subject to change but subject to a permanent and lasting relationship. I think it's an important concept, one that needs to be emphasized and enacted and, for that reason, I would urge a vote in support of combining the UN-L and UN Med