

to be addressed at the institutional level and was not. I would urge that the amendment not be adopted.

PRESIDENT: Senator Withem, you're next. But may I introduce a special guest of Senator Korshoj. We have Carol Brummond from Herman, and also with her are Greg and Sandy Brummond and their children, Randy, Whitney and Justine, from Craig, Nebraska. They're under the south balcony. Would you folks please stand and be recognized. Thank you. Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President, members of the body, I, too, rise in opposition to the McFarland amendment for a number of reasons. I think Senator Warner has given you the perspective of somebody that understands the appropriation process as it currently operates and how it could operate better than obviously anyone else here in this body. I have a slightly different perspective on this, and I guess it's one who perhaps represents a district that has absolutely no institutions of higher education within its borders. The people in my district pay taxes to support higher education in this state. We are the ones, in this body, who must make the tough decisions to determine what those levels of taxation should be. I know my constituents do not want me to turn over the responsibility for allocating those funds and determining where they should be spent wisely to some other board, some board that does not have to look them in the eye and go back and say, I raised your taxes in order to provide for a research initiative at the University of Nebraska; I raised your taxes in order to keep the Curtis institution open; I raised your taxes in order to fund the rebuilding of the pharmacy college. We, as the Legislature, I think, need to have some degree of ultimate authority over where those tax dollars are spent. What the McFarland amendment does is it places into the Constitution of our state, alleviating that authority entirely. We will have no authority over where the dollars will be spent. We might have punitive authority in the future, if we didn't like where they were spent we could cut them, but we would have no authority whatsoever. As a matter of fact, I'm one, as an individual who always has preached greater legislative involvement in that decision making. This proposal doesn't do that. And I guess deep down, if I'd have to confess to any discomfort I may have with the way the proposal is now drafted is that it doesn't provide...it continues to provide for a high degree of autonomy as far as how dollars are spent, once they are appropriated. I think what Senator McFarland is bringing to us is probably an appropriate discussion on this,