

we are talking about.

PRESIDENT: Senator Wesely, may I interrupt you. (Gavel.) Let's hold the conversation down, please, so we can hear the speakers. Thank you.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. We all come from a different history and we need to understand that. If you look on page 14, it talks about Peru State started as a seminary, then became a teachers college. Kearney State, Wayne State and Chadron State were teachers colleges, didn't have a baccalaureate degree until '21, finally were allowed to go into other fields in '49, and in 1963 were called state colleges. The University of Omaha was a city university in Omaha until 1968, when it was brought into the University of Nebraska. We have a different background when you talk about UNL, which was a flagship academic institution under the Morrill Act, a land grant institution since 1876. It is been one of the great things about our state, that we have had such a strong campus, yes, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, but also, yes, hopefully, serving the whole state, and it is absolutely essential that all of us keep in mind that role, that mission, that responsibility, and the goal I think, by those of us in Lincoln that are raising questions is not so much to oppose change but to oppose diminishment of the important role of that campus. And, yes, perhaps you can say that is parochial because I care so much about UNL, but I would say that it is perhaps parochial if you don't care about UNL because that is supposed to be a statewide institution serving the whole state, and one in which I think has helped build a great state. To make the changes proposed here may be good, may not be good. My fear is that if they turn out as the worst envisioned as I can see, we would become not Nebraska but a state more similar to South and North Dakota, where if you think about those states, what do you think about in higher education? You don't think about anything because they don't focus, they don't have a higher education system that has a campus that has the capability, the research function, the excellence that UNL has. I don't want to be North or South Dakota, no harm to them. I am sure they are happy there but I don't want Nebraska to become North or South Dakota. I want us to be Nebraska. I want us to be Nebraska with a strong institution of national reputation, of statewide impact, of an excellence that I think the whole state can be proud of. And why do I think we could become North or South Dakota? Because I think the changes proposed under this will vulcanize the state, divide the state