

state legislators basically criticizing higher education. These were all from...western states saying they are not responsive, they are not addressing the things that are threatening the kinds of states that we are and these were all...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: ...states very similar to Nebraska. And I...I sensed among that in that room that there was not going to continue to be legislative support in states like South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and Nebraska for the current system of higher ed unless it is seen as more responsive to our system. They were talking about things we have already talked about in Nebraska, the potential for telecommunications, the potential for innerstate cooperation, and so I think we have to recognize our institutions, frankly, in this state have performed pretty well up to now, but the demands of the future require a willingness to give opportunities for growing and changing on the parts of all these institutions.

PRESIDENT: Time.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: And I think if we give this a try, and if, in fact, the public decides they will support it, I think we have an opportunity for a more dynamic and a more responsive and, frankly, a more cost-effective system than we have right now. And so I am willing to give...to put this on the ballot and continue this debate and give the public a chance to vote for it.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Wehrbein, please.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. President, members, I will be brief, as I know we are getting close to lunch and perhaps we will get a vote on this. Much of what Sandy said I concur with in terms of costs and the amount of boards, but I...a year ago when we first conducted this study, I looked at this very enthusiastically and many said that we were probably making a mistake by moving so fast. I did not really think so then and I today don't think so, although I have examined this quite a bit in the last year or so. In fact, I tried to become quite skeptical of this proposal in order to see if I really thought it was the way I thought we should go, and I have concluded that we should. As we look at the need for...coordination in Nebraska, and I think it is more apparent perhaps on appropriations and