

Omaha Metro-Tech Campus, can't you give us a vote, I say, sure, I can give you a vote. When the representatives of the state colleges come and say, you know, Kearney would really like to have a master's program in business administration, and so would Wayne, and so would Chadron, and so would Peru, just give us a vote for this little bit of proposal. We tend to do that. We really, as a Legislature, not to argue against or in favor of those programs, but we, as a Legislature, tend to look at these situations in a very narrow focus and really don't give the broad system and the impacts on the broad system much attention. We are terrible gatekeepers, and my guess is if we remain as the gatekeepers,...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...what is going to happen is the diminishment of the concentrated resources in these particular programs is going to continue. We really need a body out there. I think we, as a Legislature, don't have the capabilities of being the coordinating commission and we are now. We really need a body out there that (A) has the power to enforce its decisions, which I think they do in this proposal, and (B), their only responsibility is to look at the system of higher education. Final point I want to make deals with what the folks in the New Horizons, the New Seeds for Nebraska, other groups that have looked at higher education, have said, and I am going to introduce this one by talking about a gentleman I've become quite friendly with who worked very diligently on LB 775, is no longer in a role of working on LB 775, said to me once that to turn the economy in the State of Nebraska around we really need two things. Number one, we needed 775, we needed 773, to jump-start the economy, but that is really only the first step. You don't bring about long-lasting change in the state's economy through tax breaks. What you need is a system of higher education that can provide the economic leadership with support to business to train its people, with support to business to write the research, to support the business to give the higher level training, and a system in that higher education system that can focus its resources as a state, so that we can focus on what really needs to be done. We don't have that with our current system. We have a system of higher education with nobody in charge and every level, every system of higher education working in its own direction.

PRESIDENT: Time.