

lights, would you like to close, please.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, there is no reference to any statute in my language that would be amended so it's not an attempt to make a substantive change in any other law by means of this but to give a very clear message that when we're dealing with education matters and especially those related to need-based financial student assistance that we're not going to elevate athletics over the welfare of these students. And it would really shock me if a senator would vote no against this proposal because he is concerned about the athletic department. We have been accused in this state of being...of operating a football factory, an institution of higher earning rather than learning. We have had discussions about restructuring the system of higher education for the purpose of improving the quality of what is offered to the students. I'm offering language that simply says these need-based programs are for any person who qualifies as an eligible student and we have put in statute already the substantive law what constitutes being an eligible student. You attend one of these institutions, public or private, and you have the financial need. It says nothing about athletics, being concerned about the rankings of Nebraska in the final poll, whether they're going to go to a bowl game or anything else. And I think it would be unconscionable, I think it would be reprehensible to sacrifice an entire class of students on the altar of football rankings. It seems to me that there can be no justification for such a position. When the athletic tail wags the academic dog, something is wrong. This that I'm talking about has nothing to do with the Pell Grant. It has nothing to do with any federal program. We're talking about two state-created, state-funded programs for the students who attend the universities in this state, universities and colleges. And to say that any and every student who shows need is entitled to this aid, unless certain of them play football or basketball, even though they demonstrate the need, is wrong. I hope you will adopt this intent language. It does not alter any substantive law on the books right now, but it's designed...I won't hide that, it's designed to give a message, the substantive law. The statutes say there can be no discrimination because of race, ethnic origin, sex, and the other catalogue of conditions that are usually contained in nondiscrimination statutes. But at the time that those provisions were being put into the law, it didn't occur to me at the time that there would be a necessity to say that you also