

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...perhaps Governor Orr and myself might yet constitute a majority, I'm not sure, but I would hope so.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Scofield, please, followed by Senator Moore.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President and members, I need to clarify, apparently, some things that are and are not already done. This bill was originally introduced as a potato specialist bill simply because my people out there who need this potato person desperately could have yet another hearing so we could be updated on that process of where we were in that whole ongoing change of staff out at Panhandle Station. And I have to tell you, had the committee not put the potato specialist in the mainline bill, this bill would not have been the vehicle to allow Kearney to do this. I would agree with the priority for the agricultural specialists that are in the bill not only potato, but some of the other agricultural priorities that are in the mainline bill. There seems to be some confusion about that and, Senator Lynch, we're going to grow potatoes in the Panhandle for the next generation of Lynches, too, we hope. This bill I think has been openly and honestly described of what we propose to do with it. It could have been any bill, frankly, as the vehicle to do this and you should not be confused by the process here and by some of the rhetoric that's been thrown about this morning. So the question here is, do you think Kearney has the need for the space and do you wish to give Kearney the opportunity to address those needs in, frankly, a more cost efficient manner I think than some of the current activities that are under way? I might add that while we all recognize that agriculture is the backbone of Nebraska, the kind of student that goes to Kearney State quite often has an agricultural background, quite often will return to those farms and ranches and to those cities, we hope, because if they don't they go some place else. And so it's important that we give a good facility, good classroom space to an institution as important as any of the state colleges and, frankly, Kearney is the flagship institution and growing very rapidly, so it's a justifiable activity and there really isn't good reason for the kind of concern I think that's being expressed out here. This is right up front and it's easy to understand I think the set of priorities that are here and how this particular bill is being proposed to be used as a vehicle to address needs at Kearney, but we have not left the potato specialist out. That is addressed in LB 1031. Thank you.