

out the Kearney State merger, this might be a fallback plan for us to have a vehicle to address the Kearney State issue again. And, you know, that is a relevant argument but it is very clear now that we are not going to get a message from the Supreme Court before this session is over with, or very unlikely, and so that argument is thrown out. But as I listened to the debate on General File, and I was one of 19 who voted against the advancement, I listened for what I consider to be the keys in education as well as some other issues. The keys that I listened for was, you know, what real people want in education. I think, first of all, they want access to a good quality education. They want affordability. They want to be able to pay not through the nose to educate their children in higher education campuses across the State of Nebraska, and I think they also want some accountability. Maybe that is what this bill focuses on is the issue of accountability. But, ultimately, as I was talking to Senator Baack on General File, and we were talking about this bill, and he made a comment to me that I guess ultimately led me to vote against it, and he said, what does this bill do to improve the education quality for the students? And I haven't heard a lot of that talked about and maybe that is not a relevant part of this discussion, but I, for one, feel that is the important part of any educational issue, whether it is school finance, or it is coordination of education, or student vote, or whatever it might be. I think that it has to tie somewhat back into the education quality for the student. Now I supported the student vote. I'd like to see that advanced but, obviously, it won't come if this bill does not pass, but I guess in the end I will continue either to oppose the bill or support the bracket in this case until some of those questions are answered. And I feel like the important things, as I said, is access, it's affordability and somewhat accountability, as well, and I am not sure that this bill addresses those three points for me. I have not been lobbied one way or the other on the bill. I don't have any of these institutions in my district so it really doesn't matter, but I do think that it is important that we...I guess it is important that we talk about the issue, and maybe give the voters of Nebraska a chance to continue to dialogue before we pass this on to them. Maybe that is the biggest problem is a lot of people don't even know what is being proposed for higher education at this point. You know, most of the focus has been on the secondary area of education with the finance issue this year and very little has been said about this particular issue, and I guess, as I said, I will support the bracket motion.