

on State Governments, Midwest Legislative Conference, to get the states in the Midwest Legislative Conference together to perform actions together to promote higher education. It's a means of providing greater coordination; hopefully, some cost savings in the final analysis. There are currently five states in this Midwest area that have already approved the compact, meaning it is operational, the compact is up and running. It took...provisions of the compact, it took five of the 12 Midwestern states to approve this for it to be...for it to be an operating entity. If Nebraska approves this, we would be the sixth state. The purpose of it is for the states to work together to coordinate higher education efforts. The compact could do such things as provide research in higher education questions. Within the compact states, we could negotiate agreements between states to provide for some higher education programs that an individual state could not provide altogether upon their own. Things like the high cost of programs of professional education are traditionally done, are very expensive when an individual state attempts to do them by themselves. This would give us the opportunity to negotiate agreements with other states to provide for some of these programs. Items like telecommunications are quite expensive. States in some of the other compact areas have gone together to promote telecommunications among the states so each state doesn't have to go through the expense on their own. This will not be the first compact on higher education. The WICHE, the western states compact on higher education has been running for, oh, 20 or 30 years. I believe we have, in the past, contacted that particular organization to attempt to get some support from them. There is the New England Council on...Compact on Higher Education, the Southern States Compact on Higher Education. One of the things that was asked at the committee that I think is important to clarify at this point is by joining this compact are we obligated to any ongoing obligations? By ratifying this compact we will be obligated to pay the dues each year. The dues are \$58,000. Historically, they've stayed at about that level in the other states. Are we obligated, if the compact decides that it wants to negotiate agreement among states to provide for medical education, are we obligated to support that? No, not at all. We would have to decide as an individual state whether we wish to participate in any of the specific agreements that are reached. There is an amendment that will be added in a few minutes that was an inadvertent drafting error that I think helps clarify that particular point. I know Senator Beutler had some concerns at the hearing and we did discover later on that