

February 11, 1991 LB 209

there was a single word left out and, by adding that word, I think it will clarify this point that there are no obligations incurred by the state by participating. But, by participating, we will have available to us, as state policymakers, another avenue to get additional information on higher education and to act cooperatively with the other states in the Midwest region. With that, I would, in my opening statement, if you have questions on the bill as we go along, I will be happy to answer them.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Withem. I will now recognize Senator Conway.

SENATOR CONWAY: Thank you, Madam President, and members, I would like to rise in strong support of LB 209. And Senator Withem has worked on this rather diligently in the last several months. I think, without question, the more you read on our involvement in this particular compact, it is in our best interest both for the students of the state and then putting it into the various fiscal impact that we may have finding this cooperation greatly to our benefit. As Senator Withem pointed out, the compact is up and running as the fact that Ohio was elected and brought in as the fifth state, earlier last month, in January, they finally voted themselves in, so five states are in place. We would be the sixth. The first organizational meeting of consequence is coming up in simply a matter of weeks and I think it is extremely important that if we are in a mode to be known to be the sixth participant to be able to be in on that ground level to be in a situation where the preliminary meetings or the early meetings of what the compact is going to do, setting the stage for the direction they're going to be taking, some of their priorities, that if we can be in fairly early as a member and as a ground level type member, we can direct it as to our specific needs in some of the benefits that we're going to see that come out of our involvement in the compact itself. The project, again, we are the only region that does not have such a cooperative relationship with the other states and the other regions have, in essence, established a model that we could follow. It's working well for them. We had testimony from the Western Interstate Compact, Dr. Sirotkin came in and talked about some of the involvement they have had and the positive aspects of it over the years. I think this is a golden opportunity for Nebraska to be at least in the lead, in this case being the sixth state to participate in this compact, looking for those things that we can cooperate with for cost