

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, I think it's possible to approach this bill with two different kinds of positive attitudes. And it was my lack of understanding as to how Senator Chambers was approaching the bill that caused me to discuss with him this amendment and you will note that we are co-sponsoring the amendment at this point. But the one attitude that you can have is the current situation with regard to the football program, the complex of rules that are in place, the relationship with the NCAA and the university and the whole structure of things as they are is okay and we just need this minor adjustment in order to make everything okay. Or you can take the positive attitude that I take that the situation, as it is, does require, in all fairness, Senator Chambers' adjustment but, but I don't approve of the situation as it is. The football program here and the football programs across the nation are out of control. What this amendment says, and you can read it as well as I, it is the sense of the Legislature that the University of Nebraska Lincoln, acting in conjunction with the National Collegiate Athletic Association and other schools, should immediately begin the process of seriously reducing the time spent by University of Nebraska Lincoln football players on football program activities. We are talking about student athletes and I hope that the word "student;" always comes first. Now I don't think, honestly speaking, that the word "student" does come first today here or anyplace else in the big time football leagues and I was very sad to hear the story about Columbia. But what this amendment is saying is that we want to go back to the old days, to a certain extent. We want to go back to the days when the student athlete spent a reasonable amount of time on outside activities, when the extracurricular activities were peripheral to the academic program. That doesn't mean that you and I can't go crazy about football on Saturdays. That doesn't mean that there still won't be crowds of 76,000 at the university stadium. That doesn't mean that we can't recruit. That doesn't mean anything has to change except I think we need to start reducing the demands on the student athlete, principally the time demands. If you reduced the time demands on the student athlete, you wouldn't even have this bill before you today. If you reduced the time demands and made reasonable rules, they could go out and get an extra job just like everybody else does who goes through the university, for their extra spending money. But I think it's time and especially important for this Legislature to state what the priorities of this state are, to state that we