

wishing to speak on this issue, do you have a closing, Senator Bernard-Stevens?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President. And I appreciate the comments of Senator Beutler as he always brings in an intriguing viewpoint to those bills that he participates in and I appreciate that and recognize that ability of the senator. I would just like to point out to the body the part of the problem that the cattle industry has and I think the cattle industry and the Brand Commission would be delighted, Senator Beutler, to sit down with you and Senator Schmit and talk about those overall concepts that might need to be evaluated. And that would be something that could come in at a later time. I would hope not even as an amendment to this particular bill, I would hope just as a separate bill in itself that would have a hearing and discussion to kind of review this whole area. But right now the problem that we have out there...and it's been solved in most of the other western states, by the way, but it has not been taken care of here until LB 218 is the fact that when you do have a young calf and the calf has not been branded yet and consequently then it's stolen, there is no way to follow it because there is no brand. It doesn't meet the amount requirement so that they can be prosecuted even if it is found. And what we're saying to the state is the cattle industry is a major, major portion of the state, has major implications for the economy of the State of Nebraska and what we're saying is that we recognize that the calf, even though it is young and may not weigh as much and may not have the brand yet, is an animal that needs to be looked at as far as what its true value is to the State of Nebraska. And so what we're doing to try to...what the law does now is it basically says if you're going to, for lack of a better term, go and steal cattle, if you're going to do that, the law basically says do it when they're young, do it when they're very small and you go out in the Sandhills where it's very difficult to monitor...for county sheriffs or anybody else to monitor a type of, you know, or the calf being stolen or not, and it encourages people to take the small calf and to go ahead and steal that because they know it's going to be very, very difficult to trace and even if it is, it's simply a misdemeanor. And so in order to try to cut this down just a little bit, what we've all agreed upon at one point as one way of handling it would be to simply take off the value in this particular case so that if they...if it is traced and if it is found that they know now they're not going to be just slapped on the wrist, it will be a serious offense and even this may not be