

CLERK: Madam President, LB 663 was introduced by Senators Withem, Warner and Lindsay. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 23 of this year. It was referred to the Education Committee. The bill was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments pending by the Education Committee, Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Madam Chair and members of the Legislature, LB 663 is the implementing statute to implement Amendment 4 passed by the voters last year. This is a culmination of the work that we started here a couple of years ago when we passed LB 247. It looked at a study in higher education that was designed to look at such issues as governance, coordination, role and mission, economic development as it relates to higher education, lots of other factors that were examined. The voters...we as a Legislature last year, following the long and lengthy debate on a different approach toward coordinating higher education passed on the final day a proposed constitutional amendment that would have created a coordinating commission on postsecondary education. That bill passed this Legislature, was referred to the voters, the voters approved it. This is the implementing statute but I should point out to you, and I may a time or two also as we go through debate on this, this is a different type of implementing legislation because the constitutional amendment did not authorize the Legislature to create a coordinating commission. The constitutional amendment created one. So effective January 1 in 1992, whether legislation passes or it does not pass, there will be a coordinating commission on postsecondary education. The difference will be, if we don't pass implementing legislation, they will make up their own rules on how they behave. What the Legislature is proposing to do in 663 is to direct the work of that commission to give it some priorities and sometimes maybe even some limitations on the work that they can do. The committee amendments are, oh, fairly extensive. Let me run through what they do with you so you'll have an understanding of what they do. Number one, the bill establishes that the commission will do a number of different things. The committee and its committee amendments clarifies that the completion of the comprehensive plan shall be it's, probably, first work load priority and ask that that plan be submitted by July 1 of 1992. Number two, it expands the commission's duties to distribute available incentive funds,