

of Nebraska. For quite a while we've been aware that Nebraska ranks very low in our support of these types of students. In fact, we rank last among states who have 15 percent or more of their students attending private colleges. If we take overall rank, we're 41st, we're just ahead of Mississippi. Nebraska's current scholarship programs provide support for needy sectors (sic) in all sectors of higher education. This program will be administered in the same manner as these other programs, and is different in that...only in that it applies to students attending Nebraska nonprivate...excuse me, Nebraska private nonprofit institutions, and only those students are eligible for the awards. It should be made clear that these awards are made directly to the students. This is not direct aid to any college or university at all. You may ask why we need this type of a program for students attending only independent colleges. One reason is that as we know the public sector generally supports education at the higher education level. LB 843, which we advanced a couple hours ago, included 10.5 million dollars in tuition remissions for state colleges and universities for fiscal year '91-92, included 11.1 million for fiscal year '92-93, that's in tuition remissions. Our total support for independent colleges, the independent sector, was around 388,000, a huge difference, and certainly a justifiable different. We don't argue that public education ought to be well funded. The focus of LB 647 is to assist a student in attending the college of his or her choice. We provide fairly large incentives to students choosing to attend a public facility. We provide significant subsidies to those students. That type of subsidy, if we look at what the state is funding as a portion of that education, it ranges from 2,500 per student at Kearney, to 7,000 per student at the University of Nebraska. Our support for students attending Nebraska's independent colleges averages around \$26. There is a huge difference. Even with the passage of LB 647, that support, as far as private sector students, would be increased to around \$59. We're not talking about anything that's going to be a frontal assault on public education. We're simply talking about providing enough incentive or enough aid to those needy students to give them...to make that a viable option, to make going to school in state, in the State of Nebraska an option to attending a private or independent college outside of the State of Nebraska. With that, I would urge the body advance LB 647. I'd be happy to answer any questions that may be arising.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Smith, did you wish to address