

of diversity in a pluralistic state, and because they provide cost benefits to the state, independent observers that came into the State of Nebraska. Then let me continue, as state population distribution patterns shift, some of the demand for higher education might be met in the independent sector. Financial assistance to offset the charges to students may be a cheaper alternative than new facilities and faculty at a public institution. Let me repeat, be met in the independent sector, financial assistance to offset the charges...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ROBINSON: ...to students may be a cheaper alternative than new facilities and faculty at a public institution. Indeed, some states have found it advantageous to enter into contracts with independent colleges to provide specific programs of instruction. I know at the present I don't know if this exists in the State of Nebraska. But I think these are some reasons that we're woefully behind other states, it's something that should have been done years ago, and I'd urge you to support LB 647. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Robinson. Senator Labeledz.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of LB 647, in fact I'm a co-sponsor and very proud to do so. As one of the senior members of this Legislature I have a special feeling for those issues that have the greatest effect on elderly constituents, and I know some of you are wondering what would this have to do with elderly constituents. But the ability of those who are elderly to have high quality nursing care is an issue which I'm most interested in. The independent sector of higher education currently now awards more than half of the bachelors degrees in nursing in Nebraska. Many of these students who are in nursing education are the nontraditional students, and some are homemakers who are now looking for a profession, others may be registered for practical nurses or who are trying to become better trained for their jobs. Nursing, as you know, doesn't pay as well as any other profession, so many would like to get a nursing degree, but feel they really can't afford to go to school because of the large debts they have to pay when they get out. So I believe making scholarships available to these lower income students will give them incentives to begin or continue on with their training. I support LB 647 strongly, and urge the members of this body to do