

Ashford has identified real needs in higher education and that the body of evidence before the Appropriations Committee is clear, where we stand with respect to our peer group institutions, where we stand with respect to other educational institutions in other states and what they pay, and the competition for the best of the scholars, the best of the teachers as such, that we need this amount of money and I'm...I'm grateful for Senator Ashford's leadership. I intend to support him in this measure.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE: Madam President and members, I rise to oppose Senator Ashford's amendment. First, on the grounds that when you look at the higher education as a whole in the State of Nebraska, given the situation that the other states are in and what we have done to date, it certainly could have been a whole lot worse and a few months ago it was a whole lot worse. And I think just when you want to talk about salaries, I think Senator Ashford...if you adopt Senator Ashford's amendment, the next amendment certainly in order would be to do the same for state employees. And one of the biggest concerns I have had throughout the debate on the whole salary issue is what about the state employees that I think bargained at a reasonable level through NAPE, AFSCME, and the Master Contract, recognizing some of the economic realities the state was in, I applaud them for that and I think if Senator Ashford's amendment...you need the same thing, about the same dollar amount and probably a couple million dollars at least to fully fund the bargain agreements if the state employ...for the rest of the state employees as well. And you may remember when Governor Nelson presented his budget he basically appropriated a lump sum of \$20 million for...for all government employees, treated them all the same across the board. The Appropriations Committee recognized some of the other bargaining units within the higher education in the university system, for that reason we gave, basically, quite honestly, to be very blunt about it, we basically took some of the money away from the state employees and gave it to higher education because in actuality given the economic times the state is faced with we simply could not add to it as Senator Ashford now intends to do. You know, it's very frustrating, obviously, when you cannot pay all of our state employees, not just higher education employees, what many of us think they are worth. You know, to look at page 12 of the World-Herald, if you want to talk about a problem, look at over in Iowa where they