

Schmit indicated that this bill basically addressed the problem of Norwest Bank in Lincoln and Omaha, and that's true, they're the bank that wants this bill at this moment. What is not true, however, is that this language applies to them and only to them. This is a new system, and I think we should probably call it branch branching. That is to say that with this language any bank, now or in the future, could obtain another charter in another city, merge that one back into their own home charter, and continue to have the branching rights that that other charter had. It is not simply for Norwest, it's a new way of doing branching in this state. Senator Schmit indicated that this was for existing institutions. The language of the bill doesn't say existing institutions. This is a new way of doing business, one which I think we've done little policymaking, on the part of the Legislature, thinking about what we should do. So, as Senator Schmit indicated, this bill did not influence the franchise value of a bank. I had what I thought was the most candid conversation I've had with a banker, in my 13 years down here, last week with John Cochran. John Cochran and I sat in the lobby, out here in the Rotunda, and talked to each other, cards on the table, and it was a very refreshing, frank, candid discussion. But I'll have to tell you, one of the things John Cochran told me was it does affect the franchise value of the bank, and that was one of the issues as far as the bank was concerned. That difference between what gets said out to what gets said in here really is the kind of thing that irks me about the bank structure issue. These things should be part of our public discussion. Senator Schmit cited the Wall Street Journal that said that we needed a broader system, that that was the goal for the future. And that certainly may be the Wall Street Journal. I would side with William Sidman, of the FDIC, who is now administering the FDIC fund, who questions whether or not the American banking system needs as many branches as it now has, because they represent high investments for brick and mortar for the purpose of encouraging deposits, and thereby endanger, sometimes, the profitability of institutions in that desire to expand their number of branches. And I'd say that before the Legislature rushes off here, that we should pursue that line of thought that contrasts the quotations and literature that Senator Schmit was referring to in the Wall Street Journal with the head of the FDIC, so that we all have a feeling for which way we want to project the public policy of this state. It's true that votes probably aren't going to change their mind much, and we can proceed directly to a vote.