

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR LANDIS: I would say this, this is a prickly issue, and I'm not sure the Legislature's done a particularly good job of developing the expertise, the evidence, the information, or the candid testimony of the financial community on the issue of bank structure. And I would hold out the prospect of the interim study that I introduced, that our committee is capable of doing, to bring these parties before us, and others who are interested in trying to develop an underlying policy rationale for what we do in the bank structure issue, as well as identifying the areas for growth that we should pursue, not as a corporate strategy for one bank or another, but as a strategic choice for the State of Nebraska in how it should manage, how it should relate to and regulate its financial institution industry in this state. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Crosby, followed by Senator Schmit, and Senator Robinson.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Madam President. Senator Landis, I have a couple of questions I think you're the one who can answer. And I would like to hear...when I first started, when I first supported this bill, it was about branches, it wasn't about mergers, and I visited with Norwest, too. I have a long relationship with Norwest because there is Norwest Bank in Hastings. But reiterate to me what Senator Schmit said, the Lincoln bank is an independent bank. Is that the way Norwest operates in each city? Maybe I didn't understand that to start with.

SENATOR LANDIS: I'm not sure how Norwest...maybe Senator Schmit can but I don't think so. I think the other...the other branches, the other elements of the Norwest chain are in a different situation than the Lincoln bank. I think this is an independent charter here, it's not the case elsewhere.

SENATOR CROSBY: So why can't Lincoln, right now, have branches...

SENATOR LANDIS: Lincoln can have branches.

SENATOR CROSBY: ...the Lincoln banks?

SENATOR LANDIS: Lincoln is entitled to have six branches in