

extensive as they are in the current time, where you have contributions in the area of 25, 50, 60, 70 thousand dollar contributions by one individual group, either be it PAC, individual, or company, corporate. And it is a problem that has been with us from the beginning. There have been a number of attempts to try to solve this problem with these large, large contributions. Like I said, I introduced legislation. Other members have introduced legislation. It has always had problems getting out of the committee to have a full debate before the entire body, and in my 10th year here in the Legislature, this is the first time that we've ever really addressed the issue of our campaign reform. So it is a positive step forward. I think Senator Baack has offered us a choice in trying to deal with this situation, but Senator Ashford, I believe, has really come to the crux of the matter, that being trying to reduce these large, large contributions. I think anyone that has been in a campaign where you have had to raise large sums of money can honestly say that they don't enjoy doing it. No one enjoys having to ask for contributions to get your message out so that the voters have a impartial, proper look at your record, and anyone that has been in a tough campaign can appreciate the need for contributions for literature drops, direct mail pieces, billboards, whatever, television, radio in some parts of the state, to try to get your message out. And I think even the groups that are involved in this, groups that are back in the Rotunda, I think they've also tired of having to raise funds from their membership, and it has continued to escalate and escalate and escalate. Now this problem isn't something just that affects Nebraska. It has affected the entire nation and the Congress has tried to grapple with this issue for years, and they have yet to really come up with a solution that the entire Congress can agree upon. This may be an attempt, it may pass, it may not, in trying to deal with the problem, but I feel that limiting the amount that an individual or a group or a company can give to 5,000, and then aggregating that amount to 20,000 is a realistic approach in trying to deal with this very serious problem. I am sure the groups that are involved in helping to elect individuals would support it, and I feel that most of the membership here would be relieved with this type of approach to election reform. So for those reasons, I am planning on supporting the amendment. I think it only helps the bill towards its eventual passage.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Abboud. Senator Beutler.