

September 30, 1992 LB 10

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. My discussion is not really directly related to the Schimek amendment, but it is related to the proposition of tuition remission for various state employees and nonstate employees. Several days ago, in the process of examining what types of educational assistance were available to the members of the Nebraska National Guard, we opened, I guess, a number of doors. And I wanted to bring to your attention at this time that since 1975, for members of the selected reserve forces, that is the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, and whatever reserve forces there are in Nebraska, we have provided a 50 percent tuition remission for their education in state supported postsecondary education facilities in Nebraska. For the '91-92 estimated reimbursement for the university and state college system is approximately \$211 million for this fiscal year. The reason I bring this to your attention that contrary to the dual mission of the Nebraska National Guard, the Army Reserve, while filling a valuable niche in our national defense system, are not connected in any way to use or service by the State of Nebraska, unless the President of the United States would order them into service to assist in some domestic emergency in this, contrasting to the guard who are under the call and the command of the Governor of the State of Nebraska for state emergencies. The reduction from 75 percent to 50 percent tuition assistance for the guard members amounts to approximately \$340,000, according to my estimates. With the Schimek amendment, of course, there would be a phase in on that. And I think that her amendment is well thought out and will be supported by me. But it brings, I think, to the attention of this body a problem that exists in excess of a billion and a half million dollar state budget, that there are many programs that are entered into many years ago. This one, in researching the committee and floor debate, was done for economic development purposes, to keep the reserve forces in Nebraska, at least that was the primary argument. Served no good in sound, rational state policy. In passing and in closing I would also mention that as part of the collective bargaining agreement that was authorized when the Legislature took itself out of the process of setting the compensation for employees of the State of Nebraska, there also exists another tuition remission program for state employees and in fact one for legislative employees that takes nearly \$1 million in General Fund tax money to the...to the various institutions to cover those amounts. Good policy, probably so. But these are things when we get to talking about one little part of a program sometimes we discover many other parts. Bring