

recognize many of you have heard that the Governor said that he does see it differently and that's fine, and he can take appropriate action when it...when he can and when it's appropriate. But I believe, as a committee, we are willing to stand firm on this budget, at this point, that we should continue with this and keep the investment in higher education in Nebraska as we have been doing. And so, with that, I will stop.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Bernard-Stevens, on the Avery amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, and members of the body, I, too, rise to oppose the Avery amendment and support certainly the comments Senator Wehrbein and others have made in opposition. But I wanted to put some numbers that might put this into a little bit easier perspective for all of us to look at. We're looking at tuition, even though the Avery amendment deals with the budget, we're also looking as we, Senator Wehrbein and I, discussed earlier, there's a very close connection to the amount of state support to the University of Nebraska system and the amount of tuition, and we certainly don't want tuition to get to the point where those that are...that are financially not as capable or not as able to attend or afford education, we don't want to price them out. We want it to be something that's available to all Nebraskans. We want it to be one of the best deals around in the country for education, the best education for the cost. If the state, for example, if the state aid to education to UNL only increased 2.5 percent, which was, I think, what we were kind of at in the beginning, that would be a 9 percent, if you're going to make up those funds on tuition and fees, it would be a 9 percent tuition increase. The committee has it at 5.5 increase. And the number I had, working on it this morning, is if you have a 5 percent increase on funding for the University of Nebraska system, the amount of tuition actually needed for a hold-harmless in all of the other areas would be simply a 2.4 percent increase, much more modest. If you go to 5.5, obviously, that 2.4 tuition, that number...percentage increase goes down and that's not to say that it couldn't go down even further as they get monies on other fees or wherever they may go. So the point is, I think, that this...the Avery amendment, though I understand where Mike is coming from, and certainly he has a good philosophical bent on what he is trying to do but, in essence, what we're saying is if you agree with the Avery amendment, we're also saying