

Legislature. We have 33 sixth graders, two teachers and their bus driver and two parents are here from my home town, from St. Isadore's School in Columbus. They are all in the north balcony. Will you all stand and be recognized, please. Welcome to the Legislature. Senator Wesely, your light is next, followed by Senators Brashear, Abboud, Chambers, Beutler, Bromm, Witek, Will and Vrtiska.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members, first, I'd like to respond to Senator Witek and I suggest that she get a little more realistic. The federal government is going to spend our money and that money can be spent in Louisiana or it can be spent in Missouri or Kansas or it could be spent in Nebraska. Now I think that her philosophy was backward, that it says, no, we're so conservative, we're so concerned about everything that we're not going to do anything, just stand still while the world moves forward and the money sent somewhere else. And if she wants to stand up and defend that, that's fine, she can do that. But I am suggesting that we have wasted millions of dollars that our state taxpayers have sent in to the federal government, that have gone through the federal government and gone to other states. It could have come on back home to serve the State of Nebraska and I think it's exactly the philosophy she expressed that we're trying to turn around here and head forward and not backward. So the two consequences of not doing anything were, our money goes to the federal government, then it goes to other states, and because it didn't come back to us, we then spend additional state dollars doing state services that we could have had coming back home and taking care of that problem so we had a double hit. Our federal monies didn't come back to us and because of that we had to pay more state tax dollars, so how did we win on that situation? We didn't. So number one, I'd like to work through some points I'd like to emphasize here. Number one, we should have been and need to maximize federal funding as other states have done. Almost every other state has done this far more than we have. We're one of the last and one of the few that hasn't done what needed to be done over the years. So that's point number one. Point number two is, I think that that maximization in federal funds should be done as much as possible in-house and not contracted out. It is more cost effective, more benefit to the state taxpayer and I think can be as effectively done. Number three, the Legislature and the public has to be informed and involved in the decision making on contracts and consultants and efforts along this line. Point number four, there are ideas out there that have been suggested