

argument aside, I would accept that the excessive profits that are now going on in the telephone industry in this state, right now, don't come from increases in rates, they come from additional income that they're receiving through access charges. However, it doesn't stop the fact that we have excessive profits. And I'm talking profits to the tune of 30 and 40 percent for what is a government sponsored monopoly, a government protected monopoly. What's happened in other states because of these access charges, because of exactly the same thing we're talking about in Nebraska? Well, what's happened in other states is that many telephone companies have had their rates reduced because the state regulator stepped in and did it. In Oklahoma, just two months ago, Southwestern Bell was forced to give a \$438 million refund to phone people because of excessive rates, and they had to lower their rates, in addition to the refund, \$84 million annually. West Virginia, six months ago, Bell Atlantic had to reduce their residential rates 18 percent, and that meant an annual reduction by \$6 million of the rates that they paid in West Virginia. In Georgia, six months ago, Southern Bell had to give a refund of \$8 million to their ratepayers, all of these ordered by their Public Service Commission. They had a rate reduction of \$32 million on an annualized basis. It was nine months ago, in Minnesota, that US West was forced to give a \$30 million reduction in access charges by their Public Service Commission. Last year Alabama's South Central Bell had to have their rates reduced by \$173 million, a reduction because of excessive rates. Minnesota, in '94, lowered the GTE rates by \$3.9 million. Missouri, in 1994, Southwestern Bell got \$65 million in refunds and reductions in rates by 278 million. Tell me, since deregulation, what refund or reduction has been ordered by law, and the answer in Nebraska is zip, zero, nada, not a dime. In the face of this record we have no authority whatsoever to order a rollback, to reduce a rate, to give a reduction. And guess who did that? The Legislature, the people who, after LR 41CA, will run the whole show. We'll pass these rights around to anybody because it will be ours to do. This is what we've done already. Illinois, GTE North reduced, by order of their PSC, 1.2 million annually; in Ohio, United Telephone...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR LANDIS: ...had to eliminate their touch-tone calling fees. In Lincoln we have a special touch-tone calling fee, and