

at, as a Legislature, is what sort of group or regulatory scheme do we want to have in this state? If the telecommunications bill passes in Congress what's going to be required is extreme expertise in being able to handle competition issues like we've never seen before. The balance between cable companies providing telephone service, telephone companies providing cable service, perhaps other entities that we don't even know about today getting into that market of a competitive world. I do not want the Legislature to be the regulatory body to balance those competitions because (1) it requires expertise; and (2), that places us in a real vulnerable position. We don't have the time or the ability to be that regulator. There needs to be an independent body. My position is that independent body, however, doesn't need to be in the constitution, because as I think if you talk with the Public Service Commission and others you'll find that there is some desire to have a centralized and perhaps a broader expertise group of regulators, for a variety of services. I don't want the regulation to be placed in the executive branch. For example, telephone services, one of the largest user of telephones in the state is state government. I don't want the executive branch to be able to be the user and also the regulator of those services. That doesn't make good sense either.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: And the bottom line comes and I think that you will see that there will be a time, for flexibility reasons, you'll want to get rid of the regulatory requirements in the constitution. They've had a very good and solid spot. When it was the railway commission, when we were regulating the railroads, back in the early parts of our state, it was essential. Today there is so much competition, there are so many other entities, this is a group, quite frankly, that I think has not warranted a constitutional provision. I think it's best warranted to give us the flexibility, for us to decide. And, yes, Senator Landis, it may be true, the Legislature may be vulnerable, not in taking the constitution away from the Public Service Commission, but in whatever regulatory scheme we provide. The trouble is we're vulnerable today. We could gut everything in the Public Service Commission today by statute. Has it occurred? No. And, why? At least to this point we've determined that further deregulation...