

in spreading it out among several agencies. At this point, I do not see that as being the solution. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President and members of the Legislature. I would like to briefly talk a little bit about some of the concepts that I've heard from various speakers, and some of it relates around to the Public Service Commission, itself. If this debate is about individuals, that is misdirected. If it's about what sort of institution do you want to have and what sort of things do you want to have in the future, that's good debate. As Congress begins to give us more specific things to do in the area of telecommunications, you're going to need some expertise. You're going to need people who have good, technical, fundamental policy expertise types of things. If this is an elected board, you are going to get people who I think would make for good governance. That's the reason that we elect things like the Board of Regents. If you don't like what they do, of course, you can vote them out, and from a governance point of view, that's the reason everyone in this room is here. When it comes to being a regulator, however, particularly in the upcoming years, the degree of expertise that is needed may be more than what a practical popular election can give to you, and I think it's extremely important that when you begin to face some tough issues that you are going to have to do this, and not just say, oh, they are an elected board, let them go figure that out, and when the problems arise come back to us. That's not going to...that's not going to make for good public policy. Senator Schimek brought up a point that I felt compelled to respond to, that's the reason I punched in and I guess it comes back to the power of the Legislature to have a statewide election. As you read through the constitution, I don't see any prohibition for us in establishing statewide elected offices. If that prohibition isn't there, the Legislature has the broad grant of authority to go ahead and do those things. Whether it makes...whether it makes or good sense or not is obviously up for us to decide, but in terms of raw power, I think that the Legislature, obviously, has the ability to set up elected boards, and we did things such as NRD boards, where we've elected those, although they are done on a regional basis, but they are not confined to a city or a county. They are done by region. There is a variety of other things that are out there that we should look at, and I don't think that there