

SENATOR WESELY: And let me also emphasize on the exempt issue, since we kind of tied that into this thing a little bit, is that the labor union, NAPE/AAFCSME, has taken no position in opposition to the exempt position part of the bill. So the very people that you're worried about, in terms of the employees of the state of Nebraska, do not have a concern with that provision of the bill. And I, again, but that's off the subject. Back to the point about the meetings and the desire to sit down and work together. If you want to block the chance for these individuals to work together, adopt the Witek amendment. If you want to see cooperation and collaboration as we would hope government would work, oppose the Witek amendment. I rise in opposition to it.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Withem, you wish to withdraw the amendment? It is withdrawn. We return to a discussion of the Witek amendment. Senator Wesely, your light is next. Excuse me?

SENATOR WESELY: Question.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: I believe we've had...Senator Witek has only opened on the amendment. Senator Witek, your light is next.

SENATOR WITEK: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. I won't address the Withem amendment, it's an immature response. But I will address Senator Wesely's not understanding that we're elected officials. We're not talking about elected officials in this section of the bill, we're talking about department heads who can already sit down together, and there's no question of whether there's a problem with the public meeting laws there. When we sit down together as elected officials, that's the...that's the whole reason for having that so that people who elect us have that involvement in what we're doing. So if we don't need it now, as Senator Wesely has stated, that we don't need to have an exemption from public meeting laws for department heads to sit down together, then why is this in this bill? I say it's not only not necessary and...but it speaks volumes to the people who are involved in this, quote, unquote, restructuring concept. It tells me, keep out, we don't want anybody else involved in it. Because any attorney will tell you that these department heads can meet for coffee, for whatever, talk about whatever they need to, and they don't have to be afraid, as Senator Wesely said, that they're going to be, having to use some exemption from public meeting or be involved in a