

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...on this bill.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Fisher announces that the following guest is visiting the Legislature, Tom Grooms is here from Grand Island. Mr. Grooms is sitting under the north balcony. Will you stand and be recognized please. Welcome to the Legislature. Senator Will. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President and members. I...here's your glasses, Senator Chambers. We don't want to lose those again. I thought I'd respond a bit to Senator Bernard-Stevens comments about...about the concerns about the agencies. What I described in the conflict that we had with the agencies, I think all that changed about nine months ago. I think when Don Leuenberger came in and the whole dynamics changed. The administration was committed to the partnership. Lieutenant Governor Robak was leading the effort. Don Leuenberger came in. The group dynamics went from a very divisive, very negative attitude, in my view, to a very positive cooperative one, and I'd say in the last six to nine months we have seen a whole different approach to what service in state government is about in helping with services. It doesn't take a structure to make that difference. It takes people to make that difference, but it takes a structure to solidify the impact of that cooperation. You can only go so far with the different categories and silos and positions that we have now. We have sat people down, we have gotten them to work together, finally, and it is a direction that we needed to take, but they can only carry it so far as long as we have the current structure in place. By taking and moving the services under one entity, the regulation and licensure under another, and the finance and information over in another, you then create with the cabinet the ability to bring the forces together that we've long talked about doing, we've all often thought about doing, but aren't able to accomplish because of the current structure of the statutes and the agencies and the programs. This is a massive change, that is true, and it ought to be discussed very carefully, but there's a reason why it's being proposed. There is good reason why we need to change. The problems we've had in the past are acknowledged. Now the question is, what improvements, what potential can we achieve in the future by making these changes? And that's not an easy thing to do because you're talking in the abstract in the future, versus the