

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: ...in our state than many of the institutions because of their role and mission. In fact, because of their role and mission, they are going to serve a vital link that the other state colleges and universities will not be able to meet and quite honestly I'm not sure they need to meet that because that is the role of community colleges and that's why we have a Coordinating Commission so you can have community colleges and credits transfer and we have a coordinated system. We need to fund them the same and treat them equally as well. I would again urge adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members of the body, I frankly am not sure what I am going to do with this amendment but I do need to respond to Senator Bernard-Stevens' rationale for why we need to treat them the same because I think that there is, at least from the perspective of the Appropriations Committee, a bit of faulty logic. The Appropriations Committee decided last year that any agency that came to us and said that they could not live with the amount that was included in their budget for salaries, because the negotiated salary was 4 and 3.5 percent and the recommendation from the administration for funding was at 3 percent and 3 percent; that anyone who asked for the difference would be considered. And so it was that salary number in the university and in the state colleges and also in...for Nebraska Educational Telecommunications that justified us providing the additional money. And we ended up not providing the full difference between 3 percent and 4 percent because at the university they negotiated for 4 and 4. We didn't fund for the second year that full amount, but that was the justification. It was not a justification in treating all of higher education identically. And I think the problem that we got into was that we included money for the private colleges that was not part of our veto override package last year. I think the better argument on Senator Bernard-Stevens' perspective is if we overrode the veto on this funding last year why would we not be willing to override it this year? But I think that to say that we need to treat everyone equally while there were different things that happened and I think that there is a very different situation when you're talking about negotiated salary issues and it was a huge issue for us in the