

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Oh, yeah, closing.

SENATOR WILL: Yeah, I don't think we need to open on it again, but thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. I would urge the body to support this amendment. Again, I think it's in keeping with the general philosophy of the reinstatement of funds that has been recommended by the Appropriations Committee for the other institutions of higher learning in the state of Nebraska. I believe that certainly the community colleges are equally deserving of having the benefit of the reinstatement of funds that were vetoed last year. These are extremely important educational institutions. As Senator Bernard-Stevens has indicated, they play a vital and unique role in the state of Nebraska's higher educational system. They provide not only vocational training but also training that can lead to entry into four-year institutions of higher education. And I think that in light of the anticipated property tax reductions that we are talking about in another set of bills that we are all familiar with that it would simply do service to the community colleges of the state of Nebraska to reinstate these funds at this point. I think by Senator Maurstad's comments, by the exchange between Senator Bernard-Stevens and Senator Brashear indicates that it's certainly within the keeping of the Appropriations Committee philosophy that we restore these funds. I certainly would hope that the body would see fit to do that for all of the reasons that have come out in the debate. I don't see any reason to belabor that point. I'd like to get it to a vote. With that, Senator Bernard-Stevens, I would turn the time over to you.

SENATOR CROSBY: You have about three minutes.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Believe it or not, I'm not going to need three minutes. All of the discussion points...I know, believe it or not but we'll see...all of the discussion points really has been made. The only thing I'd like to do in closing is simply again reiterate, besides the other arguments, that there's no reason to take dollars out and away. It does make sense to keep areas equal and level on their funding. This amendment would do that for community colleges, and I would urge the adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: You've heard the closing. The question is the