

gone down and spoken to Senator Hillman about the common levy concept for community colleges. And I will admit, Senator Hillman, we spent more than a minute talking about it. But if you...but if you have questions about the concept, after our conversation or after what I have to say here, I'll come down and talk to you again so we don't have to use up your time. I... But to have a...one comment that is at least relevant to Senator Beutler's amendment, Senator Beutler, I'll just simply say that I oppose your amendment and then go on and talk about other things. The concept that I was discussing with Senator Hillman and, as Senator Warner suggested, I'm working on is indeed a common levy for community colleges, and it would result in a statewide levy for the community colleges that would fit very close to the 8 cents that is in 1114 and I believe can be made workable. I'd really planned to discuss that concept through an amendment I was going to offer on Select File, but since the topic has been brought up, Senator Hillman, maybe it's just as timely to talk about it now. I'm not aware that anybody else has filed any amendments concerning the community college levy, so maybe we wouldn't have had any other opportunity. But the concept, as it would be applied to the community colleges, certainly does work, and in some ways is I think a much better...has much better application in that arena than it does in the K-12 system. And I think you're all aware that in the K-12 system I don't think it's good policy and doesn't work very well. But at least as it would be applied to the community colleges, I think it could be made to work quite well because it is my belief that truly the community colleges are a part of the higher education system in the state of Nebraska. And while I don't believe they ought to be funded by property taxes at all, the fact of the matter is that they are. And if they're going to be funded in part by property taxes, and if they are going to be a part of higher education, as I believe they are, then it seems to me to be appropriate to have a levy that extends across the entire state and supports them. The distinction in the common levy, of course, is that each region served, each region for a community college would still be entitled to set their own budget, to meet their own programmatic needs, and still be able to then finally aggregate those needs but have a statewide levy to do it. The effect across the state is quite dramatic, from Western Community College that has a relatively high levy, to Metro, for example, that has a substantially lower levy. But it does provide for uniform support...would provide for uniform support of the community colleges and at a levy that fits fairly