

for the community colleges. I would like to have that 50 percent of that vetoed amount put in as well. And the one idea that I will at least leave you with on the opening is that the University of Nebraska, for example, when we do property tax relief is not going to have a levy lid. They're not necessarily going to have a spending lid, per se, or a lid on revenues. The state colleges will be...will not have any levy lids either, nor will they be under any of the effects of 299 directly. But the community colleges will. And so I think it's, in fairness, we, (a) want to treat higher education the same but, (b) I think we want to at least recognize what part of the higher ed is really going to be hit the hardest on the property tax. It seems only fair that we at least treat them the same as we have the rest of education, of higher education even though, property tax-wise, we're not going to be treating them the same at all. So with that I share...I give whatever balance of the opening time to Senator Stuhr.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I rise in support of the amendment. I believe it was the intent of the Appropriations Committee to also include community colleges in the higher education allotment. And I feel that they should be treated fairly and equally. Maybe some of you can remember last year when we passed LB 241, and that changed the formula for the distribution of state aid to community colleges by increasing the weight for heavy vocational colleges. And I really felt that that was a step in the right direction. I feel that community colleges are doing a great job across the state and I'm extremely proud of Southeast Community College in Milford, which is in the 24th District. And I just wanted to share some statistics with you about...in 1994, they stated that there were 4,591 job openings in the areas of transportation, manufacturing, electronics, construction, business. They had only 473 graduates to fill those 4,500 jobs. So I think each year we can see that the demand for graduates from community colleges are increasing across the state. And I know that we are adding money to the budget by providing this \$108,000, but I ask for your support for this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator. Senator Wehrbein followed by Senators Hillman and Maurstad.