

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members, I briefly am going to rise to oppose the amendment. It has nothing to do with our support of community colleges. I think we all acknowledge they're a critical part. It simply is a part that it's adding money to the budget again. We're going to...we're going to be making some very severe cuts as we go down. In fact, I assume there to be some vetoes. We just, with the access to the mill levy of the community colleges, we did not think that this was necessarily a serious issue to not put in the \$108,000. Perhaps it should have been. I realize it's close. The body's probably inclined to do it. But it's simply there are many deserving areas that we can legitimately put more money into. It's...and there's going to be some others. You're going to be asked to add \$79,000 here later on. And so these things keep coming. Somewhere you have to draw the line. We happen to draw the line on this one. Maybe it isn't fair. Certainly in a lot of the things we do in our committee is not necessarily perceived as fair by everyone. And so it was simply an area that we did not seek to fund. And that's...I'll leave it at that.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you. Senator Hillman.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker and members, I rise in opposition of the amendment and I did when a similar amendment was proposed before, and that...and supporting community colleges, I think probably I'm one of the strongest supporters of community colleges on the floor because of the value of the community colleges in our area. That's not at issue now. I don't think...I'd be the first one to tell you how important they are and how involved they are in the community and the good work that they do. The point is, is this particular point of funding I don't think is necessary nor should we be doing it. You talk about an issue of fairness, I think the issue of fairness here would actually be more balanced out if it's not...if this \$108,000 were not funded. Higher education and treating them like they did the rest of it, mostly what we talked about was a salary issue, and that's what you have in the current budget with...at the University of Nebraska. The salaries of the community colleges were fully funded. They bargained a contract and there was no lessening, there was no...in any way that there was less money went out in those areas for community colleges. The university does not have a contract so we look at those in looking at what they request. But the community college budgets on salaries were fully funded.