

It is not a property tax issue at this point in time. I think the debate will be had later on when we talk about our community colleges, higher ed or not, in the way that they are funded or are they an extension of K-12 in some way. That's not an issue today. The issue today is \$108,000 which really has no basis for funding this year and should, in my estimation, not be put in the budget. Looking at all things and how they fit together, this is an issue, if you really want to talk about equality, that I don't think should be funded. And for that reason I oppose the amendment.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Hillman. Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to, very briefly, put this, this amount of funds in perspective. Southeast Community College, Beatrice Campus, last Thursday kicked off a scholarship fund drive. Their goal is \$200,000. They started out the fund drive with \$90,000 already pledged. So in addition to the support the state provides, of course, we have local property taxes involved and a lot of foundations throughout the state that also provide assistance because they understand the need of and the importance of community colleges. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bernard-Stevens, to close.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I yield the beginning of the closing to Senator Bohlke.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bohlke

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. You notice that he yielded the beginning because often if Senator Bernard-Stevens is going to yield you time and he begins to close, that time disappears. But there's something that I haven't had a chance to really...to discuss with my fellow senators this session, and has to do with the community colleges and certainly has to do with their need as far as this appropriation, and that is as you remember, we did a pilot project on welfare reform and in my area of the state. It is absolutely essential, before we go statewide, to have the community colleges well funded and able to be that partner. I had not realized until working in my area with the Department of Social Services, the Department of Labor, and the community