

the public's ability to access additional information electronically. We provided a short-term mechanism to allow that to go forward. That short-term mechanism was the ability of the Executive Board of the Legislature to approve any changes in contracts, any additional contracts, any additional information accessed electronically, and that was an adequate compromise and I think, had there not been one intervening event, everybody would have been happy with that and 1375 probably would be resting on Final Reading at this moment. The intervening event was that there was an Opinion by the Attorney General which brought into question the ability of the Executive Board of the Legislature to act in this fashion, and it probably was a correct Opinion. So where we are now then is will we maintain that spirit of compromise and cooperation and find another way to deal with this internal...this interim period of providing this access to information to individuals, information that may not currently be available but may...people may want to make available, or will we drop back to the way 1375 was originally introduced as it deals with this interim period, and that would be that it simply bans any additional contracts that provide electronic information for a fee. Having said that and, yes, I am somewhat filibustering my own amendment here just a little bit to give people a little bit of an opportunity to speak, this amendment doesn't deal with that big issue. This deals with a portion where I think everybody agrees and that is that we do need to establish a task force on electronic access to state government information; that that task force needs to do its job to create a long-term policy. My concern with that portion of the bill is that I think this is a very technical, difficult arena in which to operate. I think it is one which the typical Nebraskan, and I consider myself to be a typical Nebraskan as it relates to this information, you know, really won't know what questions to ask; that we really, in fact, do need some technical expertise to help us. Because this is, in essence, a rate-setting process to determine what is the cost of providing this data electronically, what is the incremental expense that a company will have to bear by providing this, what is a fair rate of return, and what is a cap beyond which people can...that the company should not be able to charge. You know, where we are right now is a company came in, signed a contract, the Library Commission established fees, established a situation where an extra dollar on driver's license records pretty much drives the whole system. A lot of people question that arrangement and they probably question that arrangement