

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

May 5, 1999

LB 816

hopefully between now and Select File be able to address those issues of concern that I have with Senator Bohlke. Thank you.

**SENATOR SCHIMEK:** Thank you, Senator Peterson. Senator Wickersham, you are recognized.

**SENATOR WICKERSHAM:** Madam President, members of the body, I concur with those who are rising in support of the Coordinating Commission. I think it is a particularly valuable addition to our state government and, like many others, I do not wish to weaken it to any point where I did not think it was carrying out its full constitutional responsibilities or allowed to carry out its full constitutional authority. And I think, quite frankly, that constitutional authority is rather broad. I very much appreciated the remarks of Senator Wehrbein, because I think that the Coordinating Commission has served a valuable function for the Legislature and the state as a whole, by bringing a much more detailed financial analysis to issues than I think would have been possible without them. Certainly we would not have been able to...been possible to bring forward that level of analysis on an ongoing basis. We may have been able to do it on a case-by-case basis, but the ongoing analysis seems to me to be particularly important. But, in addition, to the financial issues or the financial questions that the Coordinating Commission has presented to us, I hope that quite frankly, you all take a little bit of time to read their reports, because behind the report, behind the numbers are significant policy issues. So they're not...they're not just dry numbers. The numbers are brought into reports and represent guidance or assistance or thought for important policy issues that are going to confront us. They can't decide those policy issues, but they can advise us about those policy issues, and I think they've done a very good job in doing that. They've also highlighted some of the policy issues that I think are important to us. For example, how high should tuition be at our colleges and our university? Should that become so high that we exclude kids from attending in the absence of a very robust financial assistance program? There are different models to achieve that. The Coordinating Commission has given us reports that would allow us to choose whichever model we want and give us guidance in how to implement that model. We've always used the model of low tuition and not very high assistance. Other states choose