

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

March 13, 2000 LB 1217

will explore it in this...throughout this round of debate, is I read in the constitution of the state of Nebraska that it says, or in the Exon v. Board of Regents, in prescribing the powers and duties of the regents, a legislative act must not be so detailed and specific in nature as to eliminate all discretionary authority on the part of the regents as to how a duty shall be performed. And I, as a taxpaying citizen, don't feel like I'm getting much specificity at all. I don't feel as though I'm eliminating any discretion. And I think we have, over the years, pushed the Exon v. Board of Regents decision to the limits in terms of all we can do is do whatever we're told. Now one of the things that I think Exon does, the Exon case does still leave us with is the ability to not do it. We don't have to appropriate the money, isn't that correct, Senator Wehrbein?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: I would say so, yes.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: If this were Werner Enterprises, which on the ranking I did ranks 11th in Nebraska in terms of total revenues, it has right at the same revenue, \$1,052,000,000 as opposed to the university's \$1,070,000,000. The university has 11,000 employees, Werner Enterprises has 8,900. I keep saying to myself I understand that government and public enterprise is not just like business. But maybe there are some things that business does that are all right. And I know that in my business, and I suspect in Werner Enterprises, if they were short three-tenths of 1 percent of their total annual revenues, in order to pay their hardworking associates the health benefit for which they contracted and were entitled, I think there would be a reallocation. I think they would find that money. And I'm wondering why, Senator Wehrbein, in this instance I see the university, of course we know how the negotiating process works, which is a part of the appropriating process, too. Maybe you won't concede that, but I see they asked for \$8.5 million, the Governor cuts them to \$4 million,...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: ...and then the Appropriations Committee comes blistering through with a compromise at \$6 million. Would you share with us why?