

Senator Nelson and Senator Wesely.

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President and members, I'd like to talk about what I think is a little bigger picture than simply a limited number of members of the Board of Regents appointed by the Governor and that bigger picture involves the entire system of Nebraska state government, operation of our university and colleges, and it goes something like this. If you'd look at the big picture you'll see that the Governor of the State of Nebraska, as a Governor compared with other states, is probably the most impotent individual that has ever been put in that high of public office. By impotent I don't mean the individual, but the state of the office. We are one of the few and maybe the only state that creates a complete system of minigovernments over which the Governor for all practical purposes has no control. In the State of Nebraska, for all practical purposes, the Legislature is the Governor and the Legislature has taken itself and made itself somewhat unfunctional by virtue of our single house, by virtue of our nonpartisanship. We have created a system where there is basically no accountability, ultimately, and therefore, it's impossible to ever develop any direction. Let me just give you some quick examples we all work with and are familiar with to demonstrate the minigovernments. The Natural Resource Districts, maybe a noble creation and probably do a lot of good, but as a practical matter they function as an independent system of government out there with their own bonding power, their own tax base, all the elements of a normal government. Look at our public power, only state in the United States that has a complete system, multibillion dollar budget functioning, basically independent. You can go from there to the Game and Parks, to the university system with its Board of Regents elected, to the state colleges with their elected boards. I guess what I am saying is, at some point, if Nebraska is going to move forward into the twenty-first century, they are going to have to accept the fact that they are going to have to completely change their system of government and create a Governor or a Legislature that is coordinated and has some power. I submit to you the theory of a Governor is to have the power and the responsibility to move this state in one direction or another, whether that direction be good or bad. As it functions now Bob Kerrey, Charlie Thone, Jim Exon, all the governors have discovered after they have been there two or three years that they really are little more than a figurehead. That's the system