

into the crucible of public opinion and public hearings in which we compare the visions that others may have for us about what policy you want to have for the state. I do think that the telephone industry itself has sat down in good faith and done the very best they can to try to find a way that they can accommodate as many interests of theirs as they can and you have a negotiated piece with a lot of the major players. Now that's of value, a virtue and it's a hard thing to do. However, I would not say that simply because most of the telephone industry is pleased that we should assume that the public is well served by their internal agreements. I certainly don't accept the characterization that this bill does two things, first, continues the promise of universal service and approximates the notion of total competition. Those two things have very real internal contradictory statements. As a matter of fact, Senator DeCamp pointed out that at the very beginning of this bill is a multitude of definitions but the most important definition isn't included. You'll find later on that after this petition process that people have to go through to argue about, or I'm sorry, to object to their rates being increased that ultimately if they are successful in raising just about the same number of voters as it takes to put an initiative or referendum question onto a ballot, if they get that same number of signatures about, they then go to the PSC and the PSC gets to rule on the question of whether or not a phone company is charging in substantial excess of the actual economic cost of a service. Break it down to its tiniest, most microcosmic application. You are a rancher in the Sandhills and you are a long ways off from the rest of the line. What is the actual economic cost of your service? It could be a thousand dollars a month. You're charged \$30 a month because you have that quality of having your services lumped in with all the rest of the services, but if the question is, that the PSC has to answer, are you in a pricing range that is not more than a substantial excess of actual economic cost and you never define actual economic cost, which the amendments don't do, you will wind up saying, a rate that would charge that rancher an amount up to their actual economic cost is fair, it's legitimate, and no rate will ever be found to be too high. There is no way to find that person's rate ever too high under that kind of a pricing scheme. So while there is a multitude of definitions, one of the most very basic ones in all of the language that is proffered by the telephone industry remains undefined. Now they say in addition to