

Appropriations Committee looks at the floor debate, looks at the 14 hours, or however many there have been, and decides maybe the appropriations of the State of Nebraska aren't the sole possession of the members of the Appropriations Committee. This is a budget that's been passed, and I understand quite well a lot of the pressures that Appropriations Committee is on insofar as the statutorily mandated funding, that the salaries are now set, of course, by negotiations outside of the process, all sorts of things that we, in the Legislature, put into place that don't give much flexibility to the budget of the State of Nebraska. But when we have a budget that takes quite possibly all that has been projected by the Revenue Forecasting Board, when we have a budget that takes half of the Maximus funds and uses that as real money, which it may well be, I am not arguing that, and then we see 17, now \$16 million, I think, left over, that looks to many of us as being an awfully risky budget. Now I understand that there is not a dollar spent in this budget that is not being spent for a good program, and not going to a useful purpose, but we are teetering on the precipitous of something, I don't know what it is, and it would have been quite, quite fortunate, I think, had the Appropriations Committee taken another look at the budget, as they were asked at one point in time, because you put it together, you come up with a total. Yes, you worked 70 days. The rest of us also worked those 70 days on other issues. Nothing we have is sacred. When they get to the floor, everything is up for amendment. Everything is up for an up and down vote, and all of the information that is necessary to make sound decisions are before you. That is not true in the appropriations process simply by how the process works. I think we've come to the point in the road when we need to take a look at how we structure appropriations. When we had a two hundred million dollar state budget, this process worked well. It is almost physically impossible I think, and tremendously mentally challenging for nine people, for nine people to single-handedly with the help of the Fiscal Office put together a budget without the assistance of the other Standing Committees of the Legislature. I think we ought to take a look at some mechanisms to assist the Appropriations Committee that would also serve to give all of the members of the Legislature a better understanding of at least portions of the budget and how they were put together, rather than how the information comes out. In closing, I have been following the Bureau of Business Research monthly newsletters, and it has been kind of interesting to me when we talk about...