

keeping the institution open. I guess it is the other side of the story where there was such a serious failing from my particular point of view. The proponents of closing the institution really never made a decent case to the Judiciary Committee, neither at Geneva nor at the hearing on this bill, never really made a strong case that it should be closed. They made a very weak case, in fact. I think that if you were sitting there making a judgement yourself as to which side won, I think that you would, to a person, have decided that they did not carry the burden of proof that the institution should be closed. So on the basis of the facts presented, I guess, is how I would take my position on this particular issue. I don't think that it should be closed yet. But I think there is a broader issue here that you perhaps should give some consideration to. Right now, without this bill, the question of to close or not to close Geneva is a question simply of the appropriations process, that is that institution is not protected by statute. If you wanted to close the University of Lincoln here in...University of Nebraska here in Lincoln, you would have to have a lot of statutes, in fact you'd have to have constitutional changes too. But almost every institution that we have that is of any size whatsoever is protected by statute and you would have to come through the Legislature in order to affect it. Geneva is not protected by statute at this particular point in time. So in a sense, by passing this bill and protecting it by statute, you create, in my opinion, a leveler playing field for this particular institution, that is if it becomes necessary and if strong cases are made for closing down this institution or that institution, at least we know that the process will come through this body, all 49 of us, for Geneva as it would for any other institution that we might feel was no longer fulfilling its role and function. For that reason, although it's a close matter with me, I think that I'm going to support the bill and give those people an equal opportunity to defend their institution and to give the juvenile system, itself, an equal opportunity to defend its facilities and institutions as all the other institutions have. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to support this bill. I signed on as a co-sponsor because I believe that the pluses were far greater than the minuses. Several years ago, in fact I believe it was five