

program review mechanisms that this Legislature gave them the job to do. I also passed out to you on your desk a copy of a letter from Tom Johnston, the Executive Director of the tech schools indicating the tech school support for that program review mechanism. The tools that the Appropriations Committee is leaving to the Coordinating Commission has really nothing to do with coordination. Now I want to remind you that the costs of higher education in this state is at least 25 percent of our total budget and I think every member in here has at one point or another made the statement that we wished we could have more cooperation, more coordination between the various institutions of higher education in this state, both public and private. We've got a mechanism to do that. Admittedly it has not done a very good job in the past, but we've started giving it some tools, we've started making that commission a real Coordinating Commission. I think it would be a real mistake to back away from that start that this body is beginning with the enactment last year of LB 981. Their first report based on 981 is not due until this next fall. It seems to me the choice is very clear. We either have some sort of a coordinating mechanism over higher education or we create a super board and I don't think anybody in this body really, or not very many people at least, really want to create that super board, but I don't know any other way to get the various institutions to sit down and talk to each other unless you have a mechanism to get them to do that. We, for the first time, the last year or two, have set up mechanisms whereby, and this is unheard of or it's been unheard of in the past, whereby the University of Nebraska's Board of Regents, the State College Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of the Tech Schools actually sat down in the rooms and talked to each other about how they provide education to the State of Nebraska. We have begun a mechanism whereby, not only public education, but also the private education sector, sits down and talks to one another. The amendment that I'm offering still leaves a 36.4 percent budget cut. Now I know nobody is interested in this, it's pretty evident, I know nobody really cares, but I think that we're talking about an issue that is going to potentially cost this state thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars in the future if we don't get higher education to start coordinating between themselves.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: (Gavel.) Could we have the attention for Senator Vickers to explain his amendment.