

SENATOR VICKERS: Thank you, Madam President. I want to repeat, the amendment that I'm offering is still going to have a budget cut to the Coordinating Commission of 36.4 percent. It's not like I'm indicating, no, we don't have a budget crunch, no, we shouldn't cut the budget at this particular commission because I think that we should and it will require one staff person, at least, less. One final thing I'd like to say, I know there are many members of this body that have got data from that commission that has been less than accurate and I don't dispute that at all. I know there are many members of this body that have got reams of data when they expected to get one sheet of paper. There are members of this body that recognize that maybe there is some personality conflicts with the people in the Coordinating Commission and I don't dispute that either. I'm not saying that outfit works good. I'm not saying it works great. I'm just saying that I think it ought to work and if it doesn't work we ought to make it work, we hadn't ought to eliminate it because I think it is going to be vitally important in the future that we do have that coordination, some mechanism for us, the Legislature, and that is a state agency to have some measure of oversight over those institutions of higher learning in this state. Otherwise I think we are going to be in a position where that 25 percent of the budget is going to be totally out of our control. And I would further add that, and I think the vet school issue that we've discussed in this body a number of times is an indication of it. As we get in these tight budgetary times, as we recognize we can't be everything to everybody in higher education, we should not be making those decisions as to how we cut those programs purely in the political arena. We should have some logical mechanism to evaluate them based on the assessment and the needs of the programs. That's the job that we've given the Coordinating Commission. That's the job that they've just begun to get into. That's the job I'd think we ought to give them enough funds to continue. So I urge the adoption of this amendment. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Senator Wesely, to the Vickers amendment.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. I would oppose the Vickers amendment and support the committee effort to delete funding at least to the tune of \$104,000 from the Coordinating Commission.