

totally up to the Legislature in the future and that is totally up to Senator Warner's Appropriations Committee. That has nothing to do with the bill as it is now drafted. As it is now drafted, it is a permissive piece of legislation that allows those people who are genuinely interested in seeing the establishment of a public radio system, that are generally interested in the programming of public radio, to have an opportunity to see that system set up around the State of Nebraska using the towers that are now in place. As I said, they have to generate the money and also to take part or utilize the cost share match of 75-25 that the federal government is still offering. That may be taken away if some of the cuts in the federal programming go through so we have to recognize that, and I think it would be remiss of us to miss this opportunity to actually develop a public radio system in the state. I think the programming that is offered is of the highest quality. I know that some people feel this is socialism, that it is communism, but I think for the most part what we are trying to provide is an equal opportunity for all citizens in Nebraska to have access to the quality programming that is now being provided in Lincoln and Omaha which have private public radio stations operating in this state and, unfortunately, their transmission does not extend far enough to Harvard or Sutton, Nebraska, or in the Sandhills, or in the Panhandle, that would allow us in the rural areas of the state especially to have the opportunity to enjoy the programming that is offered, and I think if you would take a serious look at national public radio, you would see there is some outstanding programming that is available and it is not an attempt to circumvent or to destroy the private broadcasting system we have now in the state. Many other states currently have public radio. This is, I hope, just to try and move Nebraska forward in an area that I think is very important, and, as I said, I think it would be an outstanding gift to the State of Nebraska if we could have public radio for all of our citizens. So with that, Mr. President, I would move for the advancement of the bill.

SENATOR CHRONISTER: Senator Nelson.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. President and members of the body, I, too, very much support the bill, particularly with the committee amendments. I know last year the bill did not go any place because simply the fiscal note. This is, as