

from Bertrand High School and their teacher. Would you folks please welcome these seniors from Bertrand High School. Thank you for visiting us today. Senator Vickers, did you wish to...or, Senator Rod Johnson, do you wish to speak to the committee amendments?

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members, I just wanted to add my perspective because the bill does incorporate a piece of legislation I sponsored on the Institute of Natural Resources and Agriculture at the University of Nebraska and I think in looking at it, as Senator Vickers has through his legislation, or this particular bill, that it is a far-reaching plan that looks forward and tries to begin coordinating and preparing ourselves for the future. And I think that is one of the things that we have not or has not been clearly expressed to me and maybe to others of this body that if we are in the position as an appropriation body to appropriate funds to a body that then turns around and expends those funds, I guess I would like to know what the plan or direction of higher education will be in the State of Nebraska rather than waiting for crisis situations to surface before we make any real serious decisions as far as the goals of our higher education institutions. It seems to me that under this particular bill as it has been incorporated with a number of other pieces of legislation that have dealt with the planning of higher education, that we are taking I think a very positive and thoughtful step forward in trying to evaluate and assess the needs of our state and assess the needs of our students and then begin trying to provide some coordination, cooperation and assessment of the benefits that we have in this state and I think it is a good bill, but I would say that it is a far-reaching bill. And, as Senator Lynch and I were just discussing, it is one of those that you might say is a sleeper because it is late in the afternoon and many of us are tired and many are off the floor, but this is certainly one of the bills that will affect postsecondary education as substantial as anything that we may do except maybe passing the budget. But because I am deeply concerned and I would like to see the state move forward with a comprehensive plan for the future, I have been supporting 1172. I added my name to it and I think Senator Vickers has brought to us a piece of legislation that has been wanted and needed in the state for a long time. Because of those reasons, I am going to support the bill and I would urge this body to do likewise.