

SENATOR CARSTEN: Pardon?

SENATOR VICKERS: I will go ahead and proceed with my closing if that is okay with you.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Okay. Very well, you may proceed to close on the bill, Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, I appreciate Senator Warner's concerns but I simply point out to you that because the concern is that it may not work, there is no reason we had ought not to try it. I guess I would ask whether or not you think it is working right now. I have had an awfully lot of people comment to me, a lot of you, comment to me that you really had some concern about the lack of coordination, the lack of planning, the lack of direction as a total state higher education system. I would suggest to you that because of the large amounts of monies that we expend and because of the importance in terms of economic development to our state that we had ought to have some comprehensive mechanism and I agree with Senator Warner, I don't think it ought to be a super board either. I have some great concern about that. This is not creating a super board. I don't want to create a super board. But what I do think we need to create is some mechanism so that that planning can be done through some structured unstructured system, if you will. We purposely left the membership of the Planning Council rather unstructured. But I want to remind you that it is both public and private and proprietary that are part of that planning process. To ignore what happens in private education in this state from the public sector would be foolhardy. I have often suggested that had Creighton University had a school of veterinary medicine out at Boys Town, we would have never had that issue come before us in this Legislature to create one at the University. So what happens in private education does affect what we do in public education and vice versa. It seems to me we had ought to have some mechanism to plan from the statewide perspective of all of higher education. That is one of the major things I see happening with LB 1172, and, no, I don't think it is going to take a lot of money to do that. Secondly, and I think just as importantly, and I have stated this on the floor many times that I think we are fast approaching the time, if we are not already there, when we probably cannot afford the good, high quality programs in higher education and be everything to