

SPEAKER NICHOL: Debate has ceased. Senator Warner, would you like to close? Or Senator Landis, would you like to close, please?

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, again, the committee amendments are a limitation. They take out the 1992 deadline cutoff date for the whole program and I think in return for that we have told the Guard that there are some limitations that are reasonable that can be applied in this situation. There is a capping of 1200 with limitation for people who have been in the Guard for under 10 years so that you are talking about the recruits, if you will. And that is for officers and enlisted personnel and for officers additionally if they have been in for less than 10 years, they can use the program for a baccalaureate degree. As far as the arguments that have been raised about this, I suppose one understands the notion of the letters that are there. The argument that this improves the educational level of either the Guard or the citizenry seems to me to have to be balanced against the objective of this program. The objective, in fact, was not to get us the smartest, best educated Guard in the world, it was to get us a Guard. It was to attract recruits. It was a recruiting device. It has done that. That objective has been met. If, however, the question is, what are we going to do to get people good education? Well, then I think a general scholarship program rather like the one that Senator Rod Johnson had a couple of years ago is the way to do that and you don't limit it just to people in the Guard. You just undertake the business of giving the state credit for people to get a higher education. This has to be related to the business of recruitment for it to be true to its original purpose. That purpose has been met and limitations now that make this for the younger, less well-paid guardsman makes perfect sense. As far as the grandfather approach, grandfathering people into this will only grandfather in the ones who do not stay in the guard because of the credit program. All they are are people who are getting a benefit that is very personally beneficial, I have no doubt about it, whether they care about it and it makes life much easier for them it accomplishes the good of getting a college education but it does not provide us a state benefit. I see no reason for a grandfather clause because we do not secure any good necessarily for the State of Nebraska. We don't attract a new recruit with that money. We simply pay for somebody's education who can probably pay for that education out of their own Guard salary right now. So I would move the adoption of the committee amendments.