

Works Committee, we suddenly find ourselves subject on the floor of the Nebraska Legislature to making some fairly difficult decisions in areas that seem to require a tremendous amount of technical expertise. And so I know that when I was first approached by representatives of Northwestern Bell and AT&T to take a look at the issue, I sat down with a yellow pad and I began to ask lots and lots of questions, and put those answers on a yellow pad so that I could familiarize myself with this issue, and after one and a half hours of questions and answers, I knew that I could never fully understand all the ramifications of this issue, at least in that amount of time. Then I sat down with representatives of, is it GTE Sprint, I sat down with those folk and I asked other kinds of questions, sort of supplementing what I had on my yellow pad and also thinking at all times about the political contours of this kind of an issue. I thought at great length about the kind of comments that Senator Abboud made which is by all means do not take an action that may have an adverse effect on residential consumers, and having an adverse effect on residential consumers may have an adverse effect on one's political life. And I thought about comments like Senator Schmit has made yesterday which is that the bills that will go out in subsequent years will say, your rates have been increased thanks or courtesy of the Nebraska State Legislature. And I recognize that those kinds of political overtones on this issue are very large and very significant. So even though I was a layperson, but because I am a layperson and because I am not totally familiar with the issues, I am still called upon as a state legislator to make a decision. Why? Because the issue is here. Because it is in front of me. It is a real tangible palpable issue. It is one that does affect the vital health of the telephone industry in our state as well as affect our residential consumers, our business consumers, and our other users of phone services. So what does one do? Well, I got it down pretty simple for my mind. The story, as I understand it, is that our major corporate giant, our monopoly, remains regulated. Whereas a lot of other folk are not regulated and that is a product of the divestiture situation and that is a product of FCC rules, and what I then learned is that for years and years our corporate giant, our regulated giant was essentially required to maintain different kinds of phone rates, one rate extraordinarily favorable to the residential consumer. That rate was such that our phone company could never recoup its costs, could not recoup its costs in providing services to the residential consumer, and so what the phone company had to do is it had to charge much higher costs to the nonresidential consumers so that the residential consumer could continue to be