

They probably think the old boy has finally flipped, he has gone off the deep end. But I ask you to consider the plight of our young, needy students. Now, John Oberg called my attention to this problem. I can't claim any credit for it at all. Mr. Oberg planted the seed. I think we should take a look at an overlooked segment of our society. We have done a commendable job so far in taking care of facilities in spite of hard economic times. We found a way to fund construction of the Animal Science Building at UN-L and the Lab Science at UN-O. We have talked about a food processing center. We have taken big steps to enhance economic development but we haven't done anything to help the people element, our needy students. We all know the Appropriations Committee has done a herculean task in considering the budget, the delicate balance between projected revenues and funding programs. Perhaps it has been so large and so formidable that we have forgotten one key element in the fabric of our society, people, the students of today who will be our leaders of tomorrow. Let's take a look at the plight of today's high school graduate. In many cases his or her parents, not only in rural areas, but also in urban areas, are hard pressed to make ends meet. There is just not a lot of money left over to send their children to college. The student cannot expect much help from parents in many, many cases. Jobs are scarce for the student and it is difficult for him or her to fund their own education. In the meantime, because of budget cuts, the colleges and universities have found it necessary to raise tuition which places another burden on the student. Now, Nebraska has no state funded student aid program and this year we need it more than ever. On March 1st of this year, just 27 days ago, federal student financial aid was cut approximately \$1.5 million. Now, that is not a proposed cut. That has already happened. This means that 2,000 or more financially needy students will lose out for the college year that begins this coming September. Again, these cuts are real, not proposed. They are here already. Now, let's review some points regarding financial student aid. Why should student aid be funded? Federal student financial aid for Pell grants, college work study, supplemental grants and other programs has already been cut by the 1.5 million I mentioned before. Other states have student aid programs targeted on the financial needy but Nebraska does not. So the federal cut will hurt Nebraska's students especially hard. How would these state funds be distributed? Through the scholarship award program already authorized by statute but never previously funded. The intent is to use the current federal aid distribution pattern. The distribution is a responsibility of the public members of the