

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President. I was about to jump up and say Senator Haberman makes a good point and I might just support him. This is an issue that needs to be looked at very carefully before we proceed and I think Senator Warner and Senator Pappas and some others have already made a good point. I rise to oppose LB 190, as Senator Chronister proposes that we should proceed with, and we need to sit back here and think about what we are doing, where we are in the current budgetary crisis not only in Nebraska but nationally and look at, for instance, this letter that Mr. Oberg has shared with a number of us. There are some inaccuracies in there and I think we need to talk about them. The point made about declining student aid is certainly true but the major impact this year by Gramm-Rudman only hits SEOG money. It doesn't hit work study money. So I think that is a little misleading. The last statement down towards the bottom of the page about Nebraska not offering any state level aid to Nebraska students is certainly not correct. We do offer a number of kinds of aids, various kinds of scholarships, and so I would just like to bring those to your attention. But the important point to make here is in a time when our state budget is so tight and we are having an extremely difficult time adequately funding public education, I would argue that this proposal does not help and, in fact, perhaps makes the problem even greater. This is a pretty healthy fiscal note. We are pretty certain that the impact of this would shift funds away from public institutions and public students toward private institutions. And let me make it clear that I don't have any objection to private institutions and support the role they play in our total higher education system. But there is a significant difference here and one of those is level of tuition. The need base type of formula that is talked about here, need is determined by cost. So if you go to a school that has higher tuition, your need is judged to be higher. That old formula was not equitable. It still isn't and it will work, in my opinion, to make an undesirable shift in funds at a time when we are having a very difficult time adequately funding our entire public system of higher education. I am told by financial aid directors that the problem isn't as bad this year as it will be next year and I really think the solution for us, not only in Nebraska but all over the country, is not to spend a lot of time quibbling about a million four, because what we are really facing in this nation is a crisis in terms of financial aid to all students and that is largely, in my opinion, an important role that the federal government has carried out. It was sold, I believe, in the fifties as a national defense issue.