

recognize you and thank you for coming in to visit us. All right, on the Johnson comprehensive amendment, Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President and members, and I would support the Johnson amendment but do so with some reluctance, but I recognize the political situation we are in and I also know that time is short. But let me, for the record, indicate my concern about the fact that production agriculture, agriculture is the biggest and largest, most important wealth creating sector in our economy has received inadequate by our state government. It is clear that the intent of LB 1016 was to provide more direction from the Department of Agriculture to provide assistance to develop the economic potential. The production agriculture provided a number of attempts to provide assistance to diversify our crops, to look at new ways in which production agriculture would have a brighter future in this state and over a number of problems that we had with the administration and what have you. We were unable to resolve the conflict and so because of the late date, we are now having to retract a number of those items and go with just one particular concern that Senator Sieck has. I support that but I do so wanting to recognize again that we are doing an inadequate job for production of agriculture. In the agriculture department they have cut out most efforts to promote agriculture. They have commodity boards and they do a number of things but the department itself has become a regulatory function and that has been a concern to the Governor and others to change that focus. But, nevertheless, it didn't used to be that way and perhaps that role ought to be returned to them. But, nevertheless, the Department of Economic Development, where that role is now to be assumed, has not been able to pursue to any great degree a lot of work in the production agricultural sector. Now, they do a lot in food processing and I think that is important as well. But production agriculture, the core of agriculture in our state, is not getting the attention it deserves, is not getting the funding it deserves and we need to do better than we have done and that is what LB 1016 was attempting to do and it is a very great disappointment that we are not able to accomplish that goal this year in the midst of the agricultural crisis we face. But it looks like we will have to do an interim study and the Economic Development Special Committee will work with Senator Johnson and the Ag Committee as we try and pursue the concerns expressed in LB 1016 and, hopefully, next year we will be back with legislation that will be even stronger than this legislation and we will be able to give justice to production agriculture in terms of our state programs in this state and see