

and exploring the options have given us a little more insight perhaps into the directions where we have to go. And for that reason I think 2 percent is doable. Now let me go on record as saying I don't like 2 percent. If I had my druthers, I'd be giving higher education an increase this year, not a decrease, but I think 2 percent is fair. I think it is doable...

(applause heard from galleries)

SPEAKER NICHOL: Ladies and gentlemen, we do not allow...

SENATOR SCOFIELD: ...and it is a reasonable middle ground that attempts to accommodate the equal sense of agony that all of you have out there right now trying to make the decision as it is passed to the floor. But let me just point out a couple of things that I think are extremely important to keep in mind. We're hearing a lot of talk about the tough times the state is having, we're having tough times. We all know that, but if we're ever to hope to have better times, we can't afford to make the kinds of deep cuts that some people here today would like to make and I think there is a balance. And I don't know that there is a magic number that any of us can put our finger on. We've done the best we can as a committee to bring you what I believe is a responsible figure, but I'd like to point out just a couple of things. Look at where Saturn went, and I'm not saying that Nebraska necessarily wanted the Saturn plant badly, but if you read any of the press releases about why Saturn went to Tennessee, they again and again stressed the importance of the educational facilities that Tennessee offered. When we were at NCSL in Seattle I attended a session put on by the members of the States of Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. We talked about the economic difficulties that those states are currently having. And the thing that was most interesting to me was particularly Texas talked about what they are trying to do to solve their economic problems and stressed the kinds of things that they are going to try to do to make their economy turn around and go again and they are pretty similar to a lot of the kinds of things we've said in Nebraska we want to do. And if you will reflect back on the kinds of investments Texas has put in higher education over the last few years and, granted, they've had a nice pool of oil money to do that with, but I think that it would be extremely unwise for the State of Nebraska to further hinder the ability of our higher