

happening here although we are not split between Democrat, Republican, we are split between the Legislature and the Governor. And I think it's a mistake to continue this way. We are going to destroy the future of this state if we continue down this path. With the University and state colleges decimated by budget cuts that are time and again imposed on them in the middle of their budget years, this cannot go on. The direction must be turned around. Similarly, other programs and services that are vital to our state are being looked at to be eliminated and we'll talk about those later today. The direction must be turned around and we must quit deciding who will get the blame and credit. We must decide what is best for this state and this Legislature. Let the chips fall where they may. If the Governor decides he cannot help us, if he cannot open it up to allow us income tax, if he cannot open it up to allow a 2 percent rather than a 3 percent University cut, that is a decision he must make and he must live with. But we, I think, ought not to be bound by his decisions and his action or inaction. That's a decision he must make, not us. I think we should decide the fate of this amendment dealing with state colleges and the next amendment on the University based on what we see as what is best for Nebraska. And in my estimation to cut the University and the state colleges more than 2 percent, frankly, more than 1.5 or 1 percent is a serious mistake and we all know that. We've seen time and again the articles, the editorials and the public support for our higher education institutions. That support is growing in this state. They have drawn the line and said this is a priority for Nebraska. Education has always been a priority for Nebraska. I think the people of this state will support our higher education institutions and not get angry at us for trying to cut them less than other agencies because of the need for priority and that priority ought to be education. So I say, please put aside all the considerations that have been expressed in the last few minutes about the Governor and where he is at and where he is not at. I know maybe this institution, maybe you individually will take some blame, maybe some credit as a result of it that you don't foresee. I don't care anymore. I say let's put aside all of that. Let's get the job done and do what is right and let's worry about what happens afterwards for a later date because we cannot continue doing this because we'll never get out of this mess if we don't decide what is in the best interest of Nebraskans versus what is in our own best interests.