

started...when I moved back to the west and looked around was, for instance, I did some research on schools and found that people that are trained in the east just don't come back to the west. And that's true in the schools and it's true in the health care profession and so on. So we need that facility out there. Those needs aren't going to go away. I think this is an example of sound planning for the future of the well-being of all of the citizens of the state and particularly the elderly population of the state, and I would urge you to be mindful of the action we have taken here and not assume that it isn't going to cost you more in the future. There may need to be some reassessments of where the proper place in the state is to locate certain programs. But for right now I think this is equitable and just and meets a need and I would urge you to reject Senator Chambers' amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson and then Senator Wesely.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I am very grateful to Senator Chambers in raising this issue. When I read the account this morning in the Omaha World-Herald of the decisions that have been made collectively by the Appropriations Committee, this issue was the one that really struck me. I cannot think of anything more inappropriate for the Legislature to do than to reduce University funding in the scale that we are doing it, close to \$2 million, while at the same time starting a new program at the University, while at the same time starting a new school of nursing in Scottsbluff, that costs \$100,000 this year as start-up costs and in two years from now will be at \$500,000. I think that every last one of us in this Legislature recognizes that, given current revenues, given outstanding commitments, we face a time when we really have to go back and rethink a lot of the older programs, scale down some of the older programs and do some hard stuff. And it seems to me totally, absolutely inappropriate at this time to start up a brand new venture even for the meritorious purpose of assuring folk in western Nebraska that they will have access to baccalaureate degrees in nursing. Now, it's my understanding that people throughout our state have access to prebaccalaureate degrees in nurse training through our technical community schools. Those are not baccalaureate degrees, mind you, but at least those are the beginning elementary health care treatment programs, and that those students can then transfer, if they so desire, to one of the eight nursing programs, both public and private, currently operated in Nebraska. It really is an issue of whether the times are right to continue geographic access to