

to send students to either Lincoln or Omaha to get this training. Couple that with the fact that the hospital in Scottsbluff that has the diploma program is discontinuing that program because of economic times that they are faced with. So, consequently, if we don't pick up this program, which we did last session, and if we don't continue to do it now, the Panhandle area of Nebraska very shortly will be without nurses and they are in just as much need of nurses as any other place in the state. I think, frankly, that we as a Legislature owe it to the Panhandle section of Nebraska to keep in mind that they are a part of this state and they are entitled to some of the benefits of this Legislature, from this Legislature, and we owe it to them to keep what programs we can give them to them. We, for example, are not and had no intentions of doing anything other than letting this body take a good look at every one of these features here, these programs rather, that's why we gave you a list of them, and whether it be the advocacy agencies or whether it be this program or any other program, it's wide open for you to see right in the list, so we're not trying to pull anything that would be beyond the sight of the legislative body. We are making this decision on the floor and I can wholeheartedly support the actions of the committee because, frankly, western Nebraska has a hard time justifying why they want to stay with us anyhow. Let's don't give them any more justification, let's give them back something for their tax dollars. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Nelson, then Senator Schmit.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, when this came up in the last session, the \$100,000 for the nursing home in Scottsbluff, I think I felt as deeply as any senator here except maybe Senator Nichol, Senator Scofield and so on. Having chaired a committee on nursing with Senator Smith, I got a little more deeply involved in the nursing programs. I worked for and I supported the \$100,000 the first time around. I, too, am having great reservations at this point, and I do support Senator Chambers now. The tech colleges have not changed their programs and with the two year program in the tech college, it only makes two more years to go to a school of nursing for the Bachelor of Science degrees which, incidentally, is what they are all moving to, away from the diploma programs. I feel as sorry for western Nebraska or central Nebraska or North Platte. People get just as sick and the elderly are there and the need is there. There is no question that the need is there, and if at any time we're down next year that we saw fit to start a