

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this amendment restores \$66,000 to the budget. It's the only amendment that I'll be making on the floor and it supports a \$24,000 appropriation that is currently being made that is threatened for the Status of Women; \$24,000 for the Mexican-American Commission and seventeen and a half thousand dollars to the Indian Commission. These are commissions that have had a checkered past recently with respects to the appropriation process. I would remind the body that they have undergone a level of cut through the most recent budgetary session that dwarves by percentage the cuts made for all the other programs on the list. They have already had their turn at bat and they suffered a very substantial cut in the regular budget. Rather than to go at the same level of general cut which is about a percent or a percent and half, as most of the other operation reductions, these are in the order of 25 percent cuts of the yearly appropriation that was originally designed for last year and about half of their remaining monies for the year that they currently have available. The advocacy commissions have been historically lightning rods of political interest, but there are a couple of important principles that I think there should be no disagreement about. First, that they have a substantial amount of support from the communities they represent. When these agencies have been imperiled, we have seen substantial response from the community. We have seen letters from the tribal councils. We have seen letters from organizations. That level of constituent interest is very significant because these constituencies are ones normally that do not have a great deal of political power nor do they feel as if they have a great deal of vested interest in the existing political realm. They are not the ones who have lobbyists, who have organizational power, that know the ropes, that lobby easily, that have a binding economic interest that allows them to piece together a well financed political campaign or support. It is generally speaking a matter of very real commitment and sacrifice that these constituencies support the advocacy agencies. Secondly, that these agencies are about important work. We have, for example, in the coming year the expectation of a very major Women of Color Conference. We have a project in Kearney based on developing models for child care in the community, options that might be available with exiting resources to make child care more available. We have...each one of us have been given the itinerary of the Indian Commission Executive Director recently. I hope you look through that. I had a chance to look through those pages because it showed me that there has been a great deal of activity recently in that