

what down the road this program is going to cost us and, therefore, many of you chose not to vote in support of that program, and yet I am here to tell you this morning that the need is there. We have made a commitment to students. They are enrolled. So we have that consideration. In terms of the cost of the program, it is just about a wash, what it costs us to maintain the Lincoln Nursing Program would cover those costs that many of you were concerned about yesterday and so it is a way to not increase our cost in terms of nursing and yet to distribute the access to those nursing programs more equitably. You will recall yesterday, as Senator Johnson pointed out, that there are eight or nine nursing programs in the state. I think he said nine. I can only find eight at the moment, but regardless which that is, the majority of those programs are in Lincoln and Omaha, and the need for nursing is very great in rural Nebraska, and let me just give you a short evidence from that from the State Health Manpower Report, the most recent one we have, which states that the location of nurses within the state also displays some variation with respect to the highest level of education completed. In general, nurses with associate degrees or higher tend to be located to a greater degree in the midlands and southeast portions of the state, primarily in the Omaha and Lincoln areas. Nurses with no preparation beyond the diploma level are disproportionately represented in the more rural sections of Nebraska. The Scottsbluff program would give us an opportunity to address that to serve almost two-thirds of the state in terms of nursing training which currently isn't available or will not be available out there by virtue of the action that you contemplated taking yesterday. And so I simply leave you with the notion of can you justify two schools in the state 60 miles apart when the rest of the state is unserved and where the needs are greatest by virtue of the elderly population. With that, I am going to turn this over to Senator Nichol.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Senator Nichol, you have about two and a half minutes left.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Mr. President, I will make it shorter than that. Yesterday it was determined that we did want to cut taxes, that we did want to cut a program, that we did want to cut 100,000. It was a matter of where we wanted to cut it. When you have approximately two-thirds of the state not serviced and the other third of the state or fourth of the state serviced very well, it does seem fair, doesn't it, that we should offer services out there, even though, even though, it is a new