

time a university or I guess a state college campus that could have very easily have contracted with the dormitories over there and saved probably close to that entire \$20,000 figure that shows up as a line item on Senator Nelson's handout. The problem here is, is that what you're doing when you adopt the Nelson amendment is you're really doing nothing more than penalizing potential future participants. This...the purpose behind the academy I think is still there. I mean, it's still needed, it still provides the opportunity for those individuals who, as Senator Hefner pointed out, don't get to go to the Boys States and the Girls States. Those are picked by basis of top of the class usually is what it amounts to and participation in extracurricular activities. These individuals that attended there, and I was a participant in this. I was a speaker as a matter of fact, and I missed my check but I didn't, you know, I guess I didn't get in line quick enough. Anyway, the issue is, is that this deals with a different type of kid. I mean we're talking about students here from the schools for the deaf, the visually impaired, one of the two students who was able to go from my district happened to have a hearing impairment, was an outstanding student in his own right, has been able to mainstream extremely well over at South High, but, and he thought it was the best experience he'd ever had. I guess it depends on who you talk to as to whether or not the benefits were there for those individual students. People who serve in the Legislature feel that their time was well spent. Others feel that it was a waste of time, depending on what the reception was they got and what they were able to accomplish or not. I think that this is an extremely valuable program. Does it need to be revamped? You bet. Can we do as good a program for less money? Absolutely. Senator Hefner's amendment that looks at 15,000 probably is a tad miserly. I may want to look at an amendment to that to increase it a little bit, but I think I totally agree with Senator Hefner's approach to say don't throw the baby out with the bath water on this one because it is a fine program that helps kids who otherwise don't get the opportunity. They are overlooked by the administration. They are overlooked by the administration at their school because they're just not regular kids. You know, they're just not those people we think of as first or second in their class so they're not chosen to do the Boys State and the Girls State kinds of things. It's a tremendous opportunity for students to be able to participate in an event like this. All we need to do is have a little more oversight. If anybody ought to be penalized for this, it ought to be the Legislature because we didn't keep our