

would like to call the senators' attention to the south balcony. Special guests today of Senator Lindsay are 47 students from Central High School in Omaha and their teacher. Would you please rise and be recognized. Welcome to the Chamber. Thank you. Senator Vrtiska, you're next. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Madam President, I rise in support of the Chambers amendment, as I said earlier, but in strong opposition to the Landis amendment. I was one of those individuals back ten years ago, who still happen to be here, and voted against the bill which closed off our records from public review. And so I felt, at that time, that the public should have access to our telephone records and today I stand with a different point of view because the experience I've had in the last ten years and the insights I've gained from that experience tell me that it would be a mistake now to change the policy that we undertook ten years ago over my opposition. I have watched this body hung up on this issue for now six, seven, eight months when we are trying to deal with a huge budget deficit, a tremendous Medicaid problem, health care concerns that embrace our whole state and our whole nation, we talk about law issues, enforcement issues of criminal acts that concern us, we talk about the water problems, environmental problems and on and on, all the different issues that we have. And what has preoccupied us? What gets us the most concerned and uptight? It's this stupid issue of telephone records. What embraces us as we go out and talk to the public and is the first question Senator Vrtiska says he's asked as we go talk to people is the telephone records. And if we go back to the policy we had before we changed that law ten years ago, it will be with us each and every time from this point forward, year in and year out, and it's a waste of our time, it's a waste of our attention, it's a waste of the public concern to be looking at this particular issue when there are so many more important things to be looking at. We're talking about \$77,000 this whole body spent on telephone long-distance calls. We spent almost \$5 million as state government on long distance telephone calls. That information was released, individual information about each of our offices released. How many people said, I'm concerned, I'm concerned about that 77,000, I'm concerned about how much individual offices spend on telephone records? I didn't hear a public outcry. But what are they going to get concerned about? The big picture is not of concern to them but they'll get concerned about Brad Ashford making \$16 of calls to his dying mother to try and find out how things are. Or they will make a