

Senator Withem. It's AM1295. It is found in the bill books.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Madam Chair, members of the body, this amendment to 239 hopefully completes the rewrite of community college statutes. This amendment, the heart of it was a separate bill that had been introduced, had had a public hearing in front of the Education Committee. It is LB 263. You all know, I'm sure, that part of the statutes dealing with higher education is a section dealing with the role and mission of the various institutions. Community colleges had a role and mission, still have it in statute, that is fairly nondetailed, fairly general in scope. You can see what the language currently is as it relates to the role and mission on page 5 of AM1295. It says in essence role and mission of community colleges is to provide the following instruction and service priorities, lines 10 through 13 that are being stricken by this amendment. Number one, vocational technical programs and nondegree occupational education. Number two, general academic transfer degree programs. Number three, avocational and recreational courses. We have been reworking the statutes and the policy of the state as it relates to higher education for the last four or five years beginning with a bill that moved Kearney into the university system and commissioned a study of higher education. We commissioned the Widmayer and Associates to perform a study. Within their study they made a recommendation that the community colleges do, in fact, need greater emphasis, greater use of the community colleges within our overall system. We created a coordinating commission for postsecondary education that was, a constitutional amendment was passed. That group is created. They came up with a study of postsecondary education, a strategic plan for postsecondary education, excuse me. Within that they had some fairly specific recommendations for the role and mission of the community colleges. Those recommendations that they had made are contained in the green copy of LB 263 which list very specifically seven different things that were listed in the strategic plan. The Education Committee heard LB 263, thought it inappropriate to state specifically the findings of the strategic plan in statute, thought that was too specific but we did agree there need to be some rewrite of the role and mission statutes for the community college so the heart of this amendment, AM1295 to 239 is contained in Section 17 starting on page 4. In essence it says the first instructional and service