

March 4, 1980

LB 771

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Koch, do you wish to explain the bill before Senator Lewis takes up his amendment?

SENATOR KOCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a piece of legislation that we deal with upon occasions. The Education Committee dealt with it a couple of years ago. Obviously, not very effectively. Today we have LB 771. This is no inference against the former Chairperson, by the way. But presently for certification of teachers there is a fee which is a charge to them for that certification, which means they are endorsed in a certain field which fits certain rules and regulations established by this Legislature and the Department of Public Education. We are raising the fee from presently the \$12.00 fee to \$25.00 for your first certificate. If you add endorsements, there will be a \$12.50 fee charged for that from the original \$5.00 and the nonpublic schools would also pay \$12.50 for their certificate. Now you must also know that the Professional Practices Commission which polices the profession is funded from this certification fee, and you must also know that there is a certain amount of this money which is used for accreditation of schools. Now I have a real problem with this, because in my mind and I think the committee intent states this as well, that in accreditation of schools that is a state function which falls under the State Board of Education, and has been pretty much mandated by this Legislature. It is difficult for me to believe that we should use fees from teachers' certificates to help carry out accreditation of schools. I believe properly that is a general fund budget item and should be there. However, in a piece of legislation that this body passed a year or two ago, LB 596, we said that we would not give the Department or Division of Certification and accreditation any more than 17 thousand some odd dollars, and so here we are. I would also remind you when the Professional Practices Commission was created a number of years ago, that they had a surplus that one time reached over 200 thousand dollars, but a former enlightened leader of this state saw fit one time to use that money for other purposes, and that should never have been done. That should have been allowed to accrued to that Commission to pay the salaries and carry out the role and mission of that Commission. So here we are today, we are suggesting to you for your review that the issuance of a certificate go from its original amount to 25 and for additional endorsements to \$12.50 and nonpublic certification to \$12.50 as well. That is the bill. Senator Lewis has the amendment. I have seen it, and I support it.