

to go into the job market, we need to recognize that about 50 percent of the high school graduating seniors do not go into higher education, but instead go into the job market. We need to recognize that that job market is becoming more and more complex. We need to recognize that we...if we are going to expand the economical base in this state, if we are going to get in those industries who are not tied so directly to agriculture, as many folks would like to do, we need to have the trained personnel to attempt to get jobs to work in those places. This is an attempt to assist the schools to meet those needs. Now I will admit that it is difficult to talk about any bill that has a funding mechanism to it in this particular year. But I would also suggest to you that right now, when the need is the greatest, it is probably the most difficult to find the funds. We all know that. But at a point in time when people are having to leave their occupations that they used to be in, at a point in time when young people are going to be having to go into different occupations than what they had planned to, it is certainly the time when we need to be cognizant of the need for that vocational training. This bill does have a financial impact. But it also has a cost benefit that I think we need to be aware of. Not very often do we think about expenditures for education in terms of what are the cost benefits derived by the society making those expenditures. I would suggest to you and argue that dollars expended in a fashion, such as LB 415 calls for, can be returned many, many times to the State of Nebraska through more highly trained individuals in order to attract and bring in those companies that need and use those highly trained individuals, and also as far as the economic well-being of those individuals themselves, the tax dollars that they will be able to pay, based on the fact that they will be in jobs that will be paying them more money. Now I know there are those arguments that say that the place for the public schools...or the chore of the public schools is a more rounded education. This is not an attempt to take away at all the incentive or the ability of people to get that academic training in those institutions. It is not an attempt to water down the amount of academic training that the high schools of this state provide. What it is is an attempt to try to balance out the needs of the students that are in those schools. As I indicated, about 50 percent of the students don't go on to higher education. That does not mean that they don't need academic training. It does not mean that they shouldn't have a good, basic background in