

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Further discussion, Senator Ashford, followed by Senators Warner and Schmit. (Gavel.) Senator Ashford, please. This better be good.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I do also wish to thank Senator Moore and Senator Withem for the work that they put in on this amendment. Last time we debated LB 444 Senator Hannibal made a very good point, and that is that we should not, it is inappropriate state policy to treat a district, or a series of two or three districts in a metropolitan area any differently than districts outside of the metropolitan area. It was because of an historical fact, an anachronism, quite frankly, that that had taken place in reference to Westside High School, Ralston and Millard. And Senator Hannibal was right in suggesting that we needed to have a statewide policy to deal with this particular problem. The amendments to LB 444, quite clearly, resolve that problem. I, wholeheartedly, support the amendments and would agree with Senator Withem that the amendments to the amendments are inappropriate, that there is a significant difference, and would urge the rejection of the amendment to the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Warner, please. Senator Schmit on deck.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I suppose on merit I'd be inclined not to support Senator Lamb's amendment because I would agree, it would probably gut the bill. I have not been supporting 444 for one reason, and that is, as I've said before, to throw the little Class I into a larger group on a vote just doesn't make any sense with the hard feelings that it is going to cause. But I've also said on many occasions, reorganization is for the purpose of improving educational opportunity. That is really the only one that you can argue. If there is any one school system in which the likelihood of educational opportunity to be restricted, it is in the Class II school with limited enrollment because there is no way under God's earth that you can adequately fund a curriculum in a small high school that is adequate. It cannot be done. In a Class I school they can be poor, but I can see...I am aware of some Class Is that are excellent. I wish the same opportunities existed in some of the other schools that I know exist in some Class Is that I've been in. I can support changing the makeup of a county board as proposed in 444, the reorganization committee. But I can only support it if there is that level of