

**SPEAKER BARRETT:** One minute.

**SENATOR SCHMIT:** ...and I can use that argument on a number of other bills that we're going to be discussing, maybe even here this afternoon. So I'm going to oppose this amendment, going to oppose the bill. I think we ought to fold up the shop and forget about it for a while because, as Senator Warner pointed out several times earlier, there are enough problems in rural Nebraska today without this session of the Legislature adding to those problems. I would hope that you would vote the amendment down and, in fact, I'd like to see the bill die. We've got enough other problems to worry about without that. Thank you.

**SPEAKER BARRETT:** Thank you. Senator Withem, please, on the Moore amendment, followed by Senators Warner and Hall.

**SENATOR WITHEM:** Mr. President, members of the body, I am supportive of the amendment. It was an amendment that I was one of the parties working with some folks from rural Nebraska who came in as they read LB 444. They had some very legitimate concerns about the bill. The one provision we haven't talked about much today at all that I think is an important one as far as this amendment is concerned, and probably the most important part about it is the second part on Senator Moore's handout, and that is this provision that restores the language that says if you get 65 percent of the affected participants in a reorganization plan to sign a petition, that that petition goes into effect, basically notwithstanding a veto by the county reorganization committee or the state reorganization committee. Those who brought this amendment to me kind of called my bluff a little bit on my statements about local control and saying, why do you want to have a county committee or a state committee be able to veto a proposal when it is signed...when it brings students into a K through 12 system and it has overwhelming public support on the local level. They were feared that in the case of, and I'll use an example, in Senator Schmit's district had a fear in Butler County that if the small community of Rising City would decide that it could no longer support its school, which may well happen, as Senator Schmit indicated, that the problems in rural Nebraska are very real, and the population shifts in our state are very real, the day may well come when they do not find that they are able to continue to support their high school. They may find that it is to their advantage, their desire to work together with the citizens in Shelby, which is in the neighboring county, and form a new school district that way. They did not want to have the folks in David City vetoing that