

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes. Mr. Speaker and members, this is a very friendly amendment that will indeed help the bill. This amendment would be to have the schools start after Labor Day, is the intent of the amendment, and I think Senator Withem is probably for that 100 percent. But anyway this amendment, it would help boost the tourism dollars and it would also help the economic development in this state without any cost at all to the State of Nebraska. The opening date would be set after September 1st which I think would help the tourism industry, the motel industry, the restaurant industry, and it would also let the schools all start out even. So I think it is something that would be very good for the whole state. Most generally, it is always very warm the last part of August, and I think by starting after September 1st, it would always keep the schools from letting out school at noon. There has been many students and teachers that have contacted us and have said that we should start the same time, and they would prefer that it would be after Labor Day. Right now, there are several surrounding states that have this type of legislation. Iowa has it. South Dakota has it. When Iowa went to it, they estimated that they increased their tourism industry by about \$40 million. This would also help many county fairs. Right now, we have many county fairs that run into the school opening, and I think that if we would set this up so that they would all start the same, that every county fair, every school would know what date that they would actually be starting at. The major opposition for this amendment has been from the school boards. They say we are taking away local control. We are not attempting to do anything that has to do with education. We are just saying that you should all start equal, your football practice, whatever you have, would all start the same day. When we get through discussing this amendment, we will pull it, Mr. Chairman.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Further discussion, Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, if this is a friendly amendment, I don't need too many more friends in here, I don't believe. Seriously, the proposal that is being discussed is one that I supported coming out of committee and would vote for the bill if it were on the floor. Senators Schellpeper and Bernard-Stevens brought in LB 841, I believe was the number, which would provide a uniform starting date for schools. The opposition to that in the past has always been it flies in the face of local control, local citizens should make