

on an amendment that we're going to be withdrawing, but I just want to make a couple of points. Number one, Senator Withem, I was very pleased for the first time ever, I've heard Omaha counted as one of the hinterlands because Omaha Public Schools came out not in favor of the proposal and you were afraid of the hinterlands giving you some opposition to 1117 and I was tickled that Omaha would be considered one of the hinterland areas. The urban areas of North Platte and Scottsbluff, whatever, would have been in favor of the proposal. Just a couple of comments. When I picked up, pulled onto the bill with Senator Schellpeper and went to the committee hearings, I was convinced it would help the tourism industry but I was never so convinced until after the hearings began and I heard all the discussions because many of the discussions against the bill, 841, and the Labor Day school starting...uniform starting date, were so out of line, were so far off base that I had to come through at some point and make a couple points on the floor, at least for the record, to try to get a little education on the subject so that next year we'll be able to, hopefully, have the bill come up and pass. Number one, tourism in this state is the state's third largest industry, the third largest. One of the handouts that we brought out to you today was a handout that had tourism budgets going back to 1979. You know, we've done things for large corporations, we're going to be doing things for the lower middle income and the elderly and the lower income groups on tax exemptions, we're doing a lot. But the third largest industry in the state, tourism, here's what we've done since 1979, 344,000 for tourism in that year and then we went up to one million, eight-five the next year from a lodging tax. Then we went down to 921,000, the tourism industry is cut. Then we went back to \$1.1 million from General Fund; another 1.1 and so on and, in fact, finally, to '87-88 we're still at \$1.1 million again. So the third largest industry in the State of Nebraska, the Legislature has not done a thing for since 1979 and I suspect even beyond that. One of the things that this bill would have done, and we are asking the education industry to be somewhat flexible to help a large part of the State of Nebraska, was to have a unified starting date. Now, when it came out of committee it was simply going to say sometime after September 1st and we are a little bit more flexible on that with the sunset, but it would have helped the tourism industry, everyone has agreed it would help the tourism industry and it would have brought approximately \$1.6 million extra money into the state coffers, and that was just a conservative estimate. It could have been more, who knows, it may have been less, but