

CLERK: LR 202 by Senators Landis, Schimek, Warner, Crosby, Wesely, and Beutler, found on page 2684 of the Journal.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Madam President and members of the body, this resolution is about a park, about Cooper Park, which is an old park in Lincoln, and the German-Russian neighborhood of the South Salt Creek Neighborhood Association, and you may remember reading about Cooper Park, oh, about a year or so ago, when there was a lot of controversy about taking the trees out of Cooper Park, and there were a lot of people who were protesting and sitting in those trees, and it was really quite a confrontational scene that we saw on television several nights in a row. It all started because the school board was trying to solve some problems with overcrowding, and there is an elementary school called Park Elementary, and there is a junior high school called Everett, and they have decided to switch those two schools' facilities and add onto them so that one would become the junior high and the other would become the elementary school, vice versa of what they already were. And Cooper Park was rather in the middle of it because it was going to be used for some soccer fields for the school, and some other kinds of improvements. Well, the neighborhood protested and didn't feel they got a fair day in court, and they eventually, one of the neighborhood members, former neighborhood members took it to court, and the Lancaster County District Court invalidated a contract between the City of Lincoln and the Lincoln Public Schools, which would have, basically, allowed continued construction in this area. The Attorney General also determined that the city did not have title to Cooper Park, therefore, it could not give it to the school district. It was, rather, the state that owned Cooper Park, and it is still in the courts. And there is a lot of anger and a lot of frustration among the people in this neighborhood, and Senator Dave Landis has been good enough to offer himself to try to negotiate a settlement and try to get this thing moving, and settled. To date, we have been not extremely successful, partly because of a lack of time, and partly just the difficulty of bringing people together. What this resolution does is asks the school district and the neighborhood to come together, to sit down and talk about it, and see if this can't be resolved at the local level. And if it can't or if they won't, then it will come back to a resolution or to the Legislature for further action. One of those actions could be, for instance, that we give up claim to