

kids does it affect? I don't know as any one knows. I don't know that you can put a definitive number on that, that number of children. But are we further saying, as educators, at that point that, that hey, we care enough that we are not going to make it so easy to leave at 16? Is this a criticism of what people are doing now to keep kids in school? No. But will it heighten their awareness on what they might do creatively to try to do more to help keep that kid in school? Yes, I think we are doing that. I don't think we can keep on doing business as usual. I just don't. It would be real easy to walk away from this and say, yeah, let's just leave it at 16, and what difference will it make. But I think there is a difference. I am convinced. I am convinced that truancy decreased. I am convinced that kids change in their attitudes. When they know that they are going to be in school till age 18, they think differently. I think it causes us then to start thinking about those truancy factors. Do the small schools in rural Nebraska have a big problem? I don't think so. But do they have some problem? Yes, more than I think a lot of us realize. The problem isn't just in the metropolitan areas of Lincoln and Omaha, although it is substantial there, but it comes back to the same mind-set, do we want to discard these kids? And I don't, I really don't think that we do.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thirty seconds.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Byars. Senator Robinson.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I also want to compliment Senator Byars. It is always good to have a good debate, and I think we have had this. This is the third time around on this, but I think the thing we have to focus on is what is being done now. There is one whole school, elementary school, a form of elementary school in Lincoln called the Bryan Study Center, and that's where potential dropouts go, and they save them. In Omaha, they have a very extensive program which is called the individual study centers. And I have talked to several people that have taught in those, and that is where those...that's where the potential dropouts go in the Omaha school system. I don't like the...I don't like the word "discarding" because I don't think they are discarding young people. I know Fremont, Nebraska has, suburban schools in Omaha have alternative schools, and they are...they're working...they