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applied for this money up front for taking the test and the other half, and this is in the form of a loan, would be forgiven if they completed the test. So this would be their obligation to pay the second half if they weren't nationally certified. About 40 percent of teachers who apply actually do get the certification, at least that's the history so far. This would cap that portion in the bill 40 teachers to receive the registration fee. And I want to explain why I think this is important that we have this available. Some school districts currently do subsidize these fees for teachers and there have been some grant programs, but it's not fair to the whole state where some school districts may not provide it, may not be able to afford it, or some people weren't able to fit in within the grant that is a set amount. So this would make sure that all teachers would be able to apply, if they are the first 40 in any given year, for the amount which right now the total is \$2,300 to apply for the test, and this would allow those 40 teachers the first half of that amount. So to review what this amendment does is to, and hopefully we can adopt this amendment and then discuss the merits of the whole Master Teacher Program when we get to that, but this will create two caps in the bill. I think it makes the bill better and it provides a comfort level for some of the people who were concerned that it was open-ended. Some states do it this way. There are 22 states that have this program that rewards the Master Teachers right now. Some of them have capped programs, and some of them are open-ended. And so this would follow the pattern of those that have a cap in their legislation. Thank you.

**PRESIDENT MAURSTAD:** Thank you, Senator Thompson. For debate on the Thompson amendment, Senator Bohlke.

**SENATOR BOHLKE:** Thank you, Mr. President and members. I think in Nebraska the issue of Master Teacher and national board certification is a new one, and so I think some of you have indicated to me that you're struggling with this issue. I will tell you that earlier this year there were a number of us who got to hear Secretary Riley give a national speech, and when he indicated that probably one of the more important things to do...you could do is recognize national board certification and compensate for that certification. We have often said that we can...we can do any number of things here in the Legislature