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LB 117, 577

particularly the work of Senator Ron Raikes, we fully funded state aid to schools and increased special education funding. We should be proud of the education we provide the children of this state. I'm proud and pleased to announce that a few minutes ago I signed into law Senator Raikes' LB 577, the Early Childhood Education Act. We both know firsthand the value of early childhood education. I'm also pleased to say that we recognize the importance of education after high school, whether at the university, state college, or community college level. As I've said before, education is forever linked with the economic vitality of Nebraska. We cannot continue to educate the best workers in the world and export them to other states. That is why I'm pleased to see the University of Nebraska and higher education embracing their roles in economic development. That is also why Senator Landis and Senator Wehrbein's job creation package, the Nebraska Advantage, is so important. We had two choices in this state: We could do nothing and watch our population mature, our costs increase, and our tax base dwindle; or we could take bold action and commit to growing our state. I'm particularly pleased that we were able to accomplish the latter. The Nebraska Advantage positions us to grow our tax base by an estimated 57,000 jobs over the next eight years, according to the UNL Bureau of Business Research. It addresses the economic needs of small and large businesses in small and large communities, as well as our agricultural roots. Another important priority for our state that we addressed is public safety. I applaud the leadership of Senator Pat Bourne, Arnie Stuthman, Ray Aguilar, Jeanne Combs, and Marian Price on LB 117. This law will curb the meth labs here at home so that investigators can spend their time and energy on the root of the meth problem--the dealers importing it. Without your willingness to work in tandem towards this goal we might never have accomplished so much. In addition to addressing supply, we also address demand. With the help of Speaker Brashear, Senator Flood, Senator Synowiecki, we are seeking a road map to future treatment and increasing the community corrections funding for the treatment of substance abuse. We continue to work towards our goals of minimizing duplication, embracing technology, and eliminating waste. You've heard me say before that we must take small steps, save pennies to save dimes, dimes to save dollars, but it can grow into large-scale projects, like the telehealth