

April 19, 1979

LB 226

so that both intensive, physical and mental development programs can be started. The longer you wait, the more the condition has deteriorated. I am sure that many of you have seen palsy persons and how they fly on. Now this is an extremely serious disease but I do feel that if you can catch these individuals at an early age you can help them. Now please understand. This is intensive intervention with a specific handicapping condition. It is not babysitting or child care. If this comes to babysitting or child care I would be the first one to say that we have to ditch the programs because our school systems are not a babysitting institution. Now, second, LB 889 provides a means to coordinate the service Nebraska was already providing for some preschool age handicapped children and a means to fill the substantial remaining gaps. As I said, we have had some preschool services provided by a multitude of different agencies. Many of them were pilot projects of specific sights. Others which had statewide responsibilities were not really accurately covering the state and there were complete gaps in services for certain severely handicapped children with handicaps not covered by any of the services. Cerebral palsy children are the primary example. What we had was not adequate. LB 889 came in to say all severely handicapped children would be served with the school districts being the point of responsibility. Now this is important. We do not have agencies covering the whole State of Nebraska as far as mental retardant or any other of the handicap agencies. The school districts are covered through the whole State of Nebraska and they can use the services that are available. That doesn't say that the school district has to set up their own services. They can use the services that are available but it should be funnelled through the school service systems. Now I want to make one thing very clear. LB 889 never said that the local school district had to set up all new progress. The intent as it came out of the Education Committee last year was not to duplicate existing services. The intent, as I read it, was to have one point of responsibility, the school district, and for them to use and contract with existing services to the greatest extent possible. Now to Senator Lamb's bill. The way I see it, it defeats the very purpose of what this body passed last year. It proposes that the schools only serve severely handicapped children from age three and up. LB 226 would leave us with the same mess we had before LB 889 included gaps in the services. LB 226 would leave parents scrounging around for whatever they