

April 30, 1981

LB 559

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Haberman had an amendment he wishes to withdraw. Mr. President, I now have an amendment from Senator Vickers. Would you like me to read it, Senator? Senator Vickers moves to amend, Mr. President... (Read the Vickers amendment to LB 559 as found on page 1666 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, the amendment that I am offering would increase the General Fund amount of dollars to the Adult Education Program in the Department of Education by \$10,000. Now if you will notice on page 5 of the bill, the federal programs... federal fund estimation is \$139,000 and I am told that that is an increase from what it was last year, but there is one slight problem because of the way the program on Adult Basic Education is administered that these federal funds have to be matched by a certain percentage of state funds, and also the GED program that is the high school equivalency diploma program that is administered by the Adult Education Program is basically a state program and it is not possible to use federal dollars to operate that state program. Now I believe this is a very important program, especially at this point in time when we find more and more young people becoming disenchanted with the public schools and dropping out and the dropout rates are increasing. There should be some opportunity given to them to complete their high school education to make themselves productive adults in this day and age. And I might also tell you that in 1980 there were 2585 diplomas issued through the GED program and for each of those diplomas there is a fee paid of a \$5.00 fee so that this is a program that resulted in \$12,925 being returned to the General Fund of the state. So there is a direct return to the state for the program as far as just paying for the course is concerned, but there is a much greater return than that when you consider that these people that get this high school diploma are then capable of getting better paying jobs and thus paying more taxes and perhaps not being on welfare rolls and many other things. To give you an idea of the growth of this program in the past few years, in 1973 there were 954 diplomas issued to the adults or people outside of the normal public schools in the State of Nebraska, and last year, as I said, there were over 2500, almost 2600, so this is a very growing program and I believe a very worthwhile program. And I would certainly urge this body's adoption of an additional \$10,000 of General Fund monies to a program that will return untold dollars to the state when you consider the consequences of now providing an educational opportunity