

January 12, 1982

LB 423

They had an individual that they had to send off and the costs could have been \$60,000, but we diverted this to another program and we were able to save that school a considerable amount of money. But it could have been \$60,000. Also the annual cost for a student in the Hastings Regional Center is currently \$40,000, plus it is my understanding that it may now cost up to \$60,000 per year per student at the Regional Center here in Lincoln. As you can see, this is a tremendous financial burden to the state and if we can prevent this, we could create a tremendous cost saving in this time of tight budgets. This legislation will not require any additional staff because the present staff can teach this subject in the health classes while the Department of Education can provide the training that is needed. The Department of Health has identified the need for increased emphasis in the area of education of developmental disabilities. As I have stated, current statute requires that each school have a comprehensive health curriculum and drug abuse is the only area that is currently required to be addressed in this course. Some schools already offer courses about the problems of mental retardation on a voluntary basis by their own accord. While the Department of Education cannot identify how many schools include this instruction, there are schools that do this. So why not have the curriculum mandated so that all schools offer such courses on this particular issue. This bill simply requires that a curriculum be offered on the prevention of developmental educational disabilities. The bill is constitutional and it will not require any additional health classes to be offered, nor will it substantially affect the school budget. Also this bill does not require additional teachers to be hired and will virtually not affect local education decision making.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Your time is up.

SENATOR SIECK: I have got one paragraph left.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay.

SENATOR SIECK: So I ask your support of LB 423 as amended and advance it to E & R. I feel that this is needed legislation especially in times as now when we are considering cost effectiveness and I feel this bill will certainly contain cost effectiveness. Even though there is a fiscal impact of \$3000 to get such material in the health curriculum, there is a very minor cost compared to what such measures can save the State of Nebraska in the future. I urge the passage of this bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vickers, do you wish to be recognized?