

with the system for the state to tell the schools that you have to force them to stay there for another year is completely unworkable. If a young person is dissatisfied and cannot see the relevancy to what he is doing, for us to attempt to force him to stay there is going to make a disruptive influence on all of the rest of the students that are in that class. It is going to make a disruptive influence on the entire school. So even though our intentions are pure, and I can assure you that as a member of the Coordinating Commission of Adult Education, I am concerned about the high school dropout rate, I am concerned about those young people who can't see the relevancy with what they are being taught, but to hold a club over their head in this manner is not the way to achieve the desired results. The desired results need to be achieved by looking at the system, trying to provide other alternatives, and by the way, Senator Beutler and I have got a bill that I think would do that. But what we are attempting to do with this bill is certainly not going to achieve those results. To put an issue of confrontation with those young people and the school system with the government is certainly not the way to address the situation. They have enough confrontation already. You know, one year from sixteen to seventeen doesn't seem like much when you are on the wrong side of forty like I am but one year to a person fifteen, sixteen years old is almost an eternity. If there is one thing that I have learned in my life is that the older I get the faster years go by but when I was fifteen I didn't think the next year would ever come, and for us to try to force those people to stay there when they have that feeling about the next year is certainly not an advantage that we are trying to put on our school systems. Put yourself in the position of being an administrator of a school system with a young person wanting to get out and getting out and then that administrator trying to force that person to stay there. Now as I said at the outset, I think Senator Beutler's intentions are pure. I think he really truly believes that raising the age is going to somehow magically cause these young people to desire to stay in school another year longer. But I can assure you that when I was fifteen years old, I am not sure I even knew what the state law was but I can certainly tell you that I didn't give a damn what it was, I was going to quit anyway. We can raise this age to forty if you want to but those people that want to get out are still going to get out. I don't think this is the answer. I suggest to this body that we should certainly not raise the mandatory attendance age. If we are going to go any direction, we should lower it. Personally, I think we should leave well enough alone. Thank you, Mr. President.