

public interest in the State of Nebraska. I think it has come to that point where we draw that line in the sand and say this far and no further and I think we have a reasonable line that has worked well as I said for established religions, for established schools that have been in existence in this state and it doesn't really make, in my estimation, a strong case to make the changes that are proposed for the very, very small minority of people that are concerned with the issue at this time, and we are talking about a very small minority of people who are not willing to compromise, just as it appears that our situation is not allowing for compromise and we have to make a choice, a choice between the public who I believe strongly has spoken against the sort of legislation LB 652 represents versus those who are wanting to change the law. I have in my district talked to a lot of different groups. I asked them, how do they feel about the idea of Christian schools, should we provide exemptions? Overwhelmingly the response is, "No, we don't see the need for exemptions. We have had a pretty good situation, fine tuning perhaps, but certainly not to the extent proposed in LB 652 and by the Christian schools." Overwhelming, overwhelming I believe support for the present system we now have. Senator Beutler has talked eloquently about the long term implications and I want to talk about the past. Talking to my priest and some people in the Catholic schools, I am Catholic, I have become more aware of the situation of private schools than I had been before and the fact is that although some Catholics are in fact supporting some of these changes, I would say a majority do not, that they understand the fact that some minimum standards have served the state well. It provides a goal for our private schools to reach for and it protects the public and I would say at this time that we have been served well under the present system and there isn't a need that I think is trying to be expressed today for the changes that are sought. And we talked a bit about the fact that back about twenty-five years ago it used to be that in this state you could leave high school, go to the University for some summer classes, and go back the next fall and teach one through eight grades in a country school anywhere in the State of Nebraska. I know that for a fact because my mother did it for a while, up in our home county, Butler County.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have got one minute.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that, in my estimation, you know, I think that we have come a long way in the last twenty-five years and to start heading back in the direction we come from would be wrong for the State of Nebraska and that is exactly what LB 652 would say.