

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, I rise to oppose this amendment and in doing so I'd like to outline a little bit of the reasoning behind my opposition and the thinking that I have come to that regards this Christian school issue. First of all, as Senator Landis pointed out a little bit ago the interest of the state as far as education is concerned is a decision that each of us have to make individually as to what we believe is the correct and the appropriate interest or the way to meet that interest. Now as to whether or not the state has any interest in the education of its citizens I have come to the conclusion that, yes, the state does have some interest and I can tell you that as a member of the Education Committee for the last four years I have felt that interest very strongly and very sincerely. Now that interest, I believe, is to make certain that our young citizens have an opportunity to become better educated to be better citizens, to contribute more to society by being more productive and to contribute more to their country and their state by being able to participate better in the governing process that we as a democracy enjoy. So I believe it is important that the state does have some interest in protecting the educational interest of all of its citizens and I emphasize the word all. I think that interest, once you have determined in your own mind that the state should have an interest, should apply to all of its young citizens. You know we talk many times in this body about how we can't pass laws or shouldn't pass laws for specific circumstances and I suggest to you that that is what we are attempting to do here today. When I serve on the Education Committee and each of us that serve in this body, when we deal with education interest, I think what we should be doing is looking at that from the perspective as how does it affect all of the young citizens or potential young citizens of the State of Nebraska and to set up a system where we've got a dual type of provisions. If you go to one school you're going to have teachers that have been certified or some equivalent of certification based on certain criteria. Yet if you go to another school those same criteria are going to be different, I believe is fundamentally wrong. If this body in its wisdom should decide that a mechanism such as the amendment we have before us is the appropriate way to go, then I suggest to you that we should have that apply to all the schools so that all of our young citizens would be protected in the same manner and I can assure you that there are many of those smaller schools be they public or private that would like to go to this system. You know it hasn't been that many years ago since we did have a system similar to that. Now perhaps that is what we should go back to but to have two separate systems is contrary to what I believe our responsibility is. Now I can't go along with the thinking and the idea that this