

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Bernard-Stevens is next, but may I introduce some guests, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Conway has 20 students from Wayne State College and they are senior students in human services counseling, Dr. Kathy Conway, teacher, and they are in the north balcony. Would you folks please stand and be recognized. One wonders if Dr. Conway is a relative of Senator Conway. Senator Rogers has some guests in the south balcony. They have 15 1-R school students from Grand Island with their teacher. Would you folks please stand and be recognized. And thank you for visiting us today. Senator Bernard-Stevens, followed by Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body, I am almost at a loss of where to start. There is so many things to discuss on what Senator Lamb has mentioned. I think I will just try to hammer on some certain issues that we need to just go back and review and keep ahead of us. If we are not careful, we are going to let all these little scenarios, "what if" possibilities, begin to cloud the issue as sometimes issues are clouded up here in the body. First of all...

PRESIDENT: Senator Bernard-Stevens. (Gavel.) Ladies and gentlemen, could we have it a little quieter so we can hear the speakers, please. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: First of all, my initial reaction is to support Senator Lamb on his amendment because, in essence, what we would have, if we support Senator Lamb in his amendment, is we have a one-year voluntary...where each district would be able to volunteer whether they wanted to participate or not, and then after one year, we have a complete phase-in of the program. But I remember Senator Lamb saying something before we got to this amendment saying that we need some time to look at some things, we need some time to look at and phase certain things in, to make sure we are doing the right thing, and that is exactly what this section has done. Senator Baack, I suspect has compromised a great deal by bringing in a phase-in at this early stage of the game. A lot of times you might wait until Select File, or only if you absolutely needed to, but Senator Baack has come in with a phase-in at this point saying, you know, there are some people who are confused, who do not understand the bill, and who are afraid of change. There are some people out there who may be talking that their district is quality, but when it really gets down to the people choosing, deep down they are kind of afraid, and I understand that fear.