

Withem, and Senator Dierks. Senator Baack, please.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes, Mr. President and members, only briefly, I will rise in opposition to this amendment. I think that what we have passed in the amendments in the committee amendments earlier said that we will have a voluntary phase-in program that will allow Douglas County to volunteer, if they want to do that, or each school district can make that decision as to whether or not they want to volunteer to do that. We are not going to force anyone to do it the first year. It is going to be voluntary. I think that...to me it wouldn't be fair to the students in my district to only offer it to Douglas County. I think in fairness to them and in fairness to the educational opportunity for them, I think we should open it up on a voluntary basis that first year so that if school districts want to participate, and there are school districts in this state that do want to participate, so then I think we should open it up to all of those. I don't think we need this pilot program to do that. So with that, I would just urge you to reject this amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Withem, followed by Senator Dierks, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President, and members of the body, very briefly, I am really sorry that this is the first of Senator Lamb's amendments that came up, because in his series of amendments, he has some ideas there that I am planning on supporting, that I think will, in fact, improve the bill. I hate to question the motivation of another member of the body, but it appears to me as though this is a less than serious amendment. By that I don't mean that he would not be delighted if this were adopted and part of the bill, but it, really, I don't think is an attempt to improve the bill in any way, shape, or form. We just adopted a phase-in amendment overwhelmingly. I was shocked by the support that came onto the bill that that is the will of the body at this point anyway on how it wishes to phase this program in. What Senator Lamb is doing here, he is offering us a second phase-in approach, one which would isolate one county in the state, and I am not going to say it is a county that doesn't have problems, and I am not going to say it is not a county where there might be a large number of students wishing to make changes, and it ought to apply to that county, and I agree with all of those sorts of things, but to isolate it only to one county just flat out does not make good sense. And