

the next five or ten years going to be subjected to a less than satisfactory system while we develop a model for turning the thing around? Do you have an answer for that, Senator?

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yeah, I do, I think I do, Senator Schmit, at least an answer that meets my needs as to the importance of this bill. You're 100 percent right in your assumption that there exist within the state today the opportunity for all 900 of our school districts to do this on their own. When I go to meetings with educators throughout the state, I get the sense that they don't share your concern and my concern that there needs to be this improvement. This is maybe an attention getting device as much as anything to state legislative policy that we want them to start looking at those things. We don't want Loran Schmit's grandchildren or Ron Withem's children to go through the same sort of educational system that doesn't necessarily meet their needs today. The answer is, in a legal sense, we don't need this for those changes to take place. And it is not, Senator Schmit, that we encourage school districts to pick four school districts to be models, wait and see how they turn out, then have other people copy them. I'd like to see 900 school districts in the state participating for the funds in this particular bill, implementing programs and we're going to fund the four or five best to show that we appreciate quality.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Senator. I would reserve judgment on the bill at this time, and I would hope that if we move the bill, and if the bill becomes law, it's not the fact that there might be available certain funds to five school districts but that it might serve as an indication to the other 895 that perhaps their house ought to be brought into order and that they ought to provide a different kind of educational system. I was engaged in a conversation only yesterday with a young lady who told me how good her educational system was, but before we had concluded our conversation, she concurred that she didn't think it was nearly as good as it had been and somehow or other, notwithstanding the emphasis we have placed upon the education of our children, we have not produced the kind of a product that we ought to produce and so I'm going to probably support your bill at this time, Senator Withem, based upon the premise that it will serve as a lightning rod out there and maybe we will be able to get some support for the idea that there needs to be change and that we ought to do a better job because we are