

have heard very few comments by state senators on this floor that oppose the overall concept. I, personally, do not oppose the concept. However, I do raise many questions about how this overall program is going to work, how it will affect Nebraska. I don't perceive it as a backdoor approach to reorganization. I think it's an opportunity to make a choice and a choice that is best for your student or your child or daughter, son or daughter, in this case. I think what Senator Schellpeper is asking us to do is to include all the parties in the discussion of this new concept which is being discussed here and give us time and allow those who will be most impacted an opportunity to look at this program and decide whether it's right for the future of Nebraska. I think it is. I just have had some misgivings with the speed of which this bill has proceeded through this body. I've talked to almost all of my administrators in my district. My district is largely rural, and I have not talked to one who is necessarily opposed to the concept, but I have talked to those who have great concerns as to how the future of their school districts will survive under this proposal and I think that they should be afforded more opportunity to discuss this issue among themselves and with those of us in this body and the State Department of Education in making the bill work. I think it was suggested on this floor that once we make this decision it is very unlikely that at some future point we will decide to go back to the old method. I think once we make this decision it's going to be in law, folks, and it's going to be here for a long time. So my suggestion, I think what Senator Schellpeper is suggesting here with this amendment is that if we're going to make the decision, let's make sure that the decision we make is right the first time. And that is the only aspect of this bill that I really feel very strongly about is that let's not screw up once we've made this decision because I think it's going to be here for the rest of the history of Nebraska. So this is a very important bill in my mind for the future of education in our state and I just want to make sure we make the right choices, or choice in this case, once...at this time or in the future. I really feel very strongly about that.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, as Chair of the Education Committee I will be happy to carry out whatever responsibilities are assigned to us in this bill, maybe happy isn't the word, but willing might be a better term. It will be