

if you follow the, just to begin with, the Governor's recommendation on higher education, you're talking a double digit increase in higher education. Now if you really want to call this \$20 million increase over the 133 million we're now spending in state aid to education, you're talking a comparable increase in the elementary and secondary level and I happen to think that's wise. But the reason I prefer LB 89, as it now stands, over straight foundation and equalization aid is you're doing away with the confusion. This Legislature is saying, yes, we're going to spend an additional \$20 million and it's going to go towards teachers' salaries, while at the same time it's going to be the carrot out there to get those beginning teachers' salaries up in the State of Nebraska which I have always said is very, very important to me. But it was not important to me enough to go down a road of bad policy like LB 89 in its original form. Now with it as now amended it's something I can live with and you can always make the argument that next year that fund will go up and I'm sure it's probably a battle we'll have to fight, but the fact of the matter is, you know, Senator Lamb is saying state aid is better because of local control, well, LB 89 as now amended offers the maximum local control because it's just saying that if you want some additional money, that's your decision, we'll leave it with you. And what we're saying is if you, by choice as a local school board, decide to only pay your teachers the beginning teacher salary of \$15,000, we're not going to give you state aid. But the choice is with the school board, it's not a mandated salary by the state. It's an incentive. Call it a bribe if you want to. It's a bribe I can live with because we do need to do something for those beginning teachers. Senator Lamb's just \$20 million in state aid would be better than nothing but I think LB 89, in its present form, makes it very clear this Legislature is, just like we were going to do with higher ed, we're going to do some additional spending on elementary and secondary level and we're going to do some additional spending which goes towards getting our elementary and secondary teachers in this state up to a midpoint of their peer group, just like we're trying to get the university faculty up to the midpoint of their peer group, just like we're getting the state colleges up to the midpoint of their peer group and on down the line. And I think it just makes good sense to do it and LB 89, as now amended, is something you're saying, yes, we're going to try and get up to our midpoint in our elementary and secondary level just like in higher ed and it's \$20 million in LB 89 that I can live with.