

this bill gave up a lot with the Conway amendment. As a matter of fact, the initial response of the lobbyist from NSEA was not very pleased. They were not very happy with the amendment we came up with, but they agreed to it, and here it is. It is on the bill and the bill I think, as I say, is in pretty good shape. The next thing we considered was an amendment from Senator Lamb, which was an attempt, a rightful attempt on his part if you can share his philosophy, to look at where the dollars were going and shift more of those out to the rural part of the state. We voted on that. We voted it down overwhelmingly. What the Smith amendment is then, at this point, is after a lot of the concerns of the opponents of the bill were already answered with the Conway amendment, it is one more attempt to deal with the funding level. It is one more attempt to get dollars to flow more to the rural parts of the state.

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR WITHEM: I think the body spoke rather convincingly previously on the Lamb amendment, which was to do this through a method of putting the sparsity factor into the bill, that they were in adamant opposition to doing this. In many ways, I think what the Smith amendment is is another way, it is not a reconsideration in a literal sense, it is, obviously, a different amendment, but in practice, it is a revisiting of that same issue and that is, do we want to rewrite the formula of distribution? You know, I will be honest, I don't know. I have not studied how many dollars flow into my district, vis-a-vis, how many flow into Senator Schimek's district...

PRESIDENT: Time.

SENATOR WITHEM: ...versus Senator Kristensen's district. I don't think that is important on this bill and I don't think we ought to be spending our time dealing with this type of amendment when we seem to be pretty comfortable with the bill in its current form. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Peterson has some guests in the north balcony. We have 53 students from Norfolk, Nebraska. They are in the Washington Elementary School, grade four. Would you folks please stand and be recognized by the Legislature. Thank you for visiting us today. Senator Bernard-Stevens, followed by Senator Wesely.