

will not grow, it cannot grow unless the Legislature allows it to. It ought to, but that will be addressed each time we address the budget issue. I would urge the adoption of the amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Hannibal, followed by Senator Coordsen and Senator Rogers. Senator Hannibal. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Hannibal would move to amend Senator Hall's amendment. (Hannibal amendment is on page 2395 of the Journal.)

PRESIDENT: Senator Hannibal, please.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Mr. President and members, Senator Withem made me see the light because he said he wasn't going to be around later on, and there is no reason for us to drag this discussion out on this issue and then another issue later on. So what this amendment is before you is precisely what we had drafted as a committee amendment, and what it does is it just is an amendment to Senator Hall's amendment and says, instead of changing the bill, as Senator Hall would do, change the 150,000, we are going to strike the 150,000 out of the budget bill and leave \$1,000 in which is the amount that the Department of Education has asked for for the purpose of promulgation of rules and regulations. So we can have the discussion and I think it's important we have the discussion, and we might as well do it right now so that people can understand what we're talking about and have a chance to make a deliberate vote as to how you feel on this issue. Now all the things that Senator Hall said just now are accurate and I believe they are a meritorious argument. I'll be the first to admit that the things that Senator Hall said and Senator Withem had said, not only on this issue but on the SSIG program that make...that have some real merit. There is no question that private schools play a very valuable part of our education in the State of Nebraska, both at the elementary/secondary level, and at the postsecondary level. Private schools play a very valuable part. There is no question that the 34,000 students that we have in private schools in the State of Nebraska right now are taking a burden off of our public school system, and that if all those 34,000 students would go into the public school system there would be a tremendous increase in the budget to public schools. I recognize those arguments, and I think that they are...they have validity. I'm not in any way trying to suggest that private