

schools, both elementary and postsecondary, are not valuable, are not good schools and shouldn't be recognized for what they are in the State of Nebraska. However, I believe we have a major policy decision before us that we haven't had before us for quite some time, as a matter of fact since 1971. And that policy issue is, do you want to fund private schools, nonpublic schools, with taxpayers dollars? If you decide you want to do that, then you would want to vote against our amendment, this amendment, and vote for the Hall amendment and put it as part of the budget bill. If you decide that public schools, both secondary and elementary, and postsecondary, deserve our first priority with the taxpayer's dollars, then you will support this amendment. I happen to believe that our first priority is to fund our public schools, that is nothing against the nonpublic schools, it just I think is our first priority. And I think most of us on the floor realized that we aren't exactly where we should be with funding of our public schools. And until we get to that stage where our public schools are funded properly, then we ought to concentrate our efforts there and not dilute any public funds for nonpublic schools. That's the reason why I've offered this amendment, that is the reason why I think it's important policy decision to be made. There is a secondary issue that is...that really isn't as important, and that secondary issue is if you make the policy decision you want to fund private schools with public dollars, don't you think we ought to know how we're going to do that? We don't know right now. We don't have any rules or regulations. Who is going to get the 150,000? Is it going to be based on a first come, first served basis? Is it going to have any need base parameters attached to it? What happens when that money runs out? Senator Hall is correct, we do have the law changed in 1986 that says it's an up front appropriation. We're not going to be involving ourselves past the appropriation that we make. But within the up front appropriation, in this case the 150,000, we don't know how that money is going to be spread out. I think it's important, at the very least, that we hold off on the appropriation in the aid part, put the money in the rules and regulations part for now, have the Department of Education come down with some rules and regulations to show us how that money would be distributed, to show us what the impacts would be. And then next year have a serious policy discussion. Do we want to do this? My personal belief is that if we are going to get involved in education, the taxpayers dollars and private schools, that maybe our first area of choice would be a tax credit on tuition. I believe Senator Hall has introduced a