

May 16, 1989

LB 813

SENATOR HALL: ...for kids who need it. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Schimek, please, followed by Senator Warner and Senator Langford.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I don't know if I can add too much to what Senator Hannibal has said, but I would like to try. I'd like to begin by saying I think that all of us on this floor recognize that the role that public...or that private schools play in our educational system, and we also recognize the fact that if we did not have private schools that public schools would have a larger burden of the educational process. But the fact of the matter is that the private sector has grown to fulfill a need that people saw, and they were willing to undertake the financing of those private schools in order to educate their children in the manner that they saw fit. I guess I think maybe, Senator Rogers, what is disturbing about the \$3 figure is not the \$3 per child, that certainly seems like a paltry amount, but we don't know where the road is going. We know that through SSIG, through special education, through transportation that there already have been some needs that have been met in the private sector. I guess the question that I have is if we now do textbooks, now what will be on the agenda next year, and what will be on the agenda the following year? And will \$3 be enough in the textbook next year, and will \$3 be enough the following year? I think that most of us would acknowledge that most programs grow. So I think that the fear is that this will do nothing but continue to grow. Maybe we're being alarmist, and maybe that is not fair. But I think it's a big public issue question, and it needs a lot of discussion. The other side of the coin is, have we done enough for the private...or for the public school sector. Have we made the commitment that we need to the public schools? Have we, in fact, increased state aid in the past two years? How do we stand in relationship to the other states? Most of you who have been on this floor know the answers to those questions because you've debated them and discussed them for years. So, I guess before we go ahead with this issue, I would just like to encourage us all to support this amendment, to study the question, to be able to talk to our constituents and to find out how the public really feels about expanding in this area. Thank you.