

strong, strong supporter of increasing state aid in a couple of areas, obviously, because I think state aid has been promised to the schools for so many years when we put income and sales in and it was not given the way it was supposed to. We have not funded our schools the way we promised and intended and we need to get the funds back to them. I totally agree with that. I would also like to talk about a couple of other things that Senator Withem did not talk about and that is the mood of the Legislature the last few years, even before I came. We were worried at one time and we still are concerned that our best and brightest of our young people were exiting the state, were leaving the state because there were better job opportunities elsewhere and they were leaving the state and they still are leaving the state. And we instituted 773 and 775 and a host of other packages in order to try to increase job opportunities. And the whole idea is to keep the people here because the opportunities were not...our best were leaving. At the University of Nebraska we heard the same things that there were better economic opportunities elsewhere and our best and brightest of professors were leaving and our children who went through our university were not getting the kind of education that their lives and that they, themselves, depend on us to give them. They went anyway but we were falling short. We changed that with Governor Orr and the leadership of the Legislature. We put more money into faculty salaries. We made a commitment to research and the University of Nebraska has improved and people are doing better things at the university but it's because there is a better opportunity there. I have a difficult time understanding the floor of this body when we take those same attitudes and we cannot transgress that same chasm over into education. I have a difficult time understanding how the body can do these things for business and then say education is different. We are not competitive salarywise. In the western part of the state, particularly in small school districts, and I understand, Senator Smith, that not all people will get funds through this, the majority are. We are not being competitive in salaries and the best and the brightest teachers in those areas leave. Believe me, I know. Many of you were teachers many years ago. I was a teacher just two years ago. Believe me, I know, they are leaving because there are better economic opportunities elsewhere and they have to be responsible to themselves and their families. And our education system is suffering. You look at the wall chart on education and the nation, itself, is in trouble on education and we are right up there at the top some...in a comparison but we're comparing to a