

that we're not moving that fast. You know, Senator Hefner talks about we're moving way too fast. I think if you read the bill and you look at...look at how slowly this is phased in over a five-year period, we're not moving too fast. We're moving much more slowly than other states. Since we started debating choice in this Legislature, Iowa has passed choice. Iowa has a one-year phase in and then they're automatically into choice full fledge. Arkansas has passed choice. They also have only a one to two-year phase in. Those people are moving much faster than we are. But I think we have...I think what we have here is a very reasoned approach to it and I think we are going to go into it in a very slow reasoned manner. I think that one thing you have to realize is that we're not going to necessarily learn that much from other states. We're going to learn a few things but our education structure in this state is totally different and we finance education totally differently. We can't just follow their model and I used the idea of choice from Minnesota but our bill looks totally different than Minnesota's. And Minnesota, this year, had a bill introduced in their Legislature to deal with the problems that they have had with choice so far. I reviewed that bill that was introduced this year. We answer every single one of their problems in choice in Nebraska. We already deal with those up front. I think we have done a very...I think I have done a job that I have looked at very carefully over...it's been over three years now that I have been looking at it and studying choice and seeing how we could use it in the State of Nebraska. I think I've got a bill here now that is in very good shape and that...and that would be good for the State of Nebraska. One thing that I do want to say, there has been some concern about some schools and some of the contracts that they have. There are schools now that...especially around some metropolitan areas, around Grand Island and Columbus and Bellevue, Papillion, some contracts that they have. Choice does not negate those and choice is not meant to negate those contracts. Those contracts are supposed to be valid and they will still be valid even if we do have choice. So it's not meant to cause any problems with those contracts.

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR BAACK: Another thing that I would...that I would like to stress is that I think that this is a chance for Nebraska to be a leader. I think we can get out into the forefront on this thing and be a leader in choice. And I think we can do so because we're the first state to address how you are going to