

school. By the time they have reached high school age, many of them are not as knowledgeable about health education issues as they were in junior high school. And, at the same time, a lot of evidence now points to the fact that we have health problems at a much earlier age than we used to; earlier cigarette smoking, earlier drug abuse, earlier alcohol abuse. So it is thought by many that we need to lower the ages when we begin discussing some of these health education issues. The bill very clearly says that the material must be appropriate for the age level being taught. Why do we need this? If you will look at the sheet that I passed out, LB 514, which is a two-sided sheet, down at the bottom of the front page, on the right-hand side, it talks about some statistics that have been gathered about Nebraska students. And you will notice that it says 60 percent of Nebraska high school students admit to being sexually active. Five percent of Nebraska high school students have injected illegal drugs. Sophomore girls have percent body fat which exceeds those calculations of sophomores in other states. Sixty percent of high school seniors, 60 percent have used alcohol. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among young people 15 through 24 years of age. Over 30 percent of elementary children display at least one prime risk factor for heart disease; 25 percent display two or more risk factors. Fifty percent of girls ages 6 through 17 cannot run a mile in less than 10 minutes. I might mention that some over 40 cannot do that either. Over 30. Also, nearly 40 percent fewer seventh graders reported smoking after exposure to comprehensive health education in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, and not just smoking education. If these results are extrapolated to all seventh grade's nationwide, that is, if every seventh grader is exposed to quality comprehensive school health education curriculum, nearly 150,000 seventh graders per year who would have started to smoke, would not. I think that each of us probably has evidence in our own families of young children who have been through these kind of classes and who really will not consider beginning starting smoking. Project Graduation or Live to See The Sunrise programs that have been adopted by many schools, even here in Lincoln, and others across Nebraska, which tries to decrease the number of automobile accidents among teens during graduation period have been very successful. In some communities, there have been broad-based community programs which have been started to reduce teen pregnancies and they have been very effective. I guess that what I am trying to explain here is that there is evidence, there are facts and figures by studies that have been done in Nebraska, as well as in many