

as St. Mary's High School in O'Neill that has had a tremendous amount of difficulty keeping their school open, to the point that the superintendent had said that it will have to close after this year, this current school year. Well, a group of concerned parents and students formed an organization called SOS, or Save Our School. And in an almost incredibly short period of time they raised, through pledges, in the neighborhood of 500,000 dollars, I'm sorry 300,000 dollars, over a period of about two months in pledges and actual donations. And they have come up with some foundation grants to help. Now I don't know how many students there are in that high school, I'm going to guess in the neighborhood of 120, I'd imagine there were 30 to 35 students per class over there, and it may be more than that. It has been more than that. What do you think would happen to the public school system in O'Neill were that group of students thrust on the taxpayers for education in O'Neill? What do you think would happen to the tax structure of the citizens in O'Neill, Nebraska, if they had to support that entire school system? And that was almost a reality. Fortunately, with the help of those people who have been so concerned, they've been able to come up with...it's a somewhat stopgap measure, but it is keeping the schools open. And I think they have these pledges set up for a period of five years to ensure that the school is going to be viable for that period of time. Now they're not off the hook yet. They still have a lot of work to do to collect those pledges and to gather a few more. So what little amount of tax credit they would receive from this legislation would certainly be a help. I mean they were out collecting dimes and nickels to help this thing work, and we're talking about not much more than dimes and nickels in the way of tax rebate to these type of people. I think it's extremely essential to the citizens of our state. I think when we look at the possibilities of what it could cost the taxpayers of that district without these schools, I think we can see the necessity of giving them all the help that we can. I certainly support this bill and I hope you will, too. Thank you.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Senator Lindsay, please, followed by Senators Nelson, Abboud and Hall.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I think what the...most of this argument today has been going to the constitutionality. I think most of it is brought up by Mr. Mosher's opinion. I think all that Mr. Mosher's opinion does, as far as impact on this body, is gives you an excuse to