

appreciate that. If they don't support the bill, I hope they leave with the feeling of comfort of what a no vote on LB 1059 means because we have talked an awful lot about what it means to support this legislation. I hope you ask questions of what it means if this bill or a bill like this does not pass this session. This is a lengthy process. This is a process that developed, obviously we have been dealing with it since the first state aid measure passed in Nebraska, when Senator Warner through many repeated tries, finally back in 1968 did pass a state aid to education measure. That original proposition has been modified by our successors in this body numerous times since then. What we now have I think is a very convoluted process of funding education in our state. The Legislature committed itself to following this process of resolving school funding about three years ago when we decided rather than fight out the LB 444 debate on school district reorganization, we'd ask some people around the state to sit down around a table and attempt to resolve some of the long-standing issues in education. We did that. One of the things that was created by the LB 940 process was the School Finance Review Commission. It was appointed by the Governor; 16 members from around the state, not all professional educators, not all politicians, a lot of just very good solid citizens of the State of Nebraska served on that commission. They worked for 18 months coming up with a... I think it has just been about two years ago now when the first meeting of that commission took place. They have held hearings all over the state. They have analyzed a mass of data, and what you see before you in 1059 is their recommendation. Before we get into the recommendation, though, there is a legislative cliché that we have here in Nebraska. It is a cliché that if it is not broken, don't fix it. I would like to have a quarter for every time I have heard a witness come before a legislative committee with that admonition to us when something is considered. In the area of school finance and in the area of the reliance on property tax, I am here to tell you today the system is broken. It is irreparably broken unless you do a massive change like the change we have before you. We have in Nebraska huge variances in the amount of dollars that are behind each student, and you can explain some of those away but you can't explain it away in the aggregate. We have students in this state that are having less than \$3,000 a year spent on their education. We have students in this state that have over \$6,000 a year spent on their education. It is an unfair system. The current system is unfair. We have in this state property taxes supporting education that are as low as half of 1 percent