

Senator Baack, we did travel around the state, received input. I know he had many meetings with many people over the summer and we did discover some things that needed to be changed in the Open Enrollment Act. Primarily because this bill was drafted by Senator Baack and his office, there are some needs for some improvements in the bill. So that's what the committee amendments do. They are primarily clarification in nature, clarifying that the choice period for a parent is September 1st through January 1st, that the proration of the reimbursement option districts is based on enrollment, not on actual attendance. Those are difference that make...they're like tax liability and tax receipts, they make a big difference to the people that administer the programs and we got the wrong one referenced here, and those kind of things. They are purely technical in nature and I would urge you to adopt the committee amendments. I do have one that is slightly more than...more than clerical in nature which I will be offering as an amendment to the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT: We have an amendment to the committee amendments. Shall we take those up now? Okay, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Withem's amendment to the committee amendments is on page 651 of the Journal.

PRESIDENT: Senator Withem, please.

SENATOR WITHEM: Okay, the amendment to 843 that is on page 651, this is a problem, frankly, in the original drafting of the choice legislation. It was brought to our attention by Jim Cunningham from the Nebraska Catholic Conference. If you remember last year, we made to eliminate shopping around via school districts, we made it clear that they only had one choice. They could...a student could choose or a parent could choose to send a student to a district other than the student's own once. They could make that choice once and then at the conclusion of that they had to, if a student didn't like that choice, the only option they had was to go back to their home district. A very literal reading of that would take away the option of that student who had gone to a neighboring district, decided they didn't like that neighboring district but wanted to then attend a private school, a parochial school, that they wouldn't be able to do that. Now this amendment gives them what we all know is their right to attend, using their own money, using their own expenses, to opt out of the public system into