

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I, too, would rise, Mr. President and members, in support of the amendment. You've already heard from Senator Landis and Senator Schimek about the Lincoln perspective. I don't want to be redundant, but nevertheless, Lincoln does have a unique situation. We've looked at, nationally, and I understand research has indicated we're the eighth fastest city in the country right now. Lincoln is booming right now for whatever reasons. We're having some real success in terms of growth and that success is causing us some problems and those problems are inherent in our school system in finding overcrowding that is leading to busing, that has led to some controversy in the city, that is leading to other considerations and concerns about adequate facilities, and this is causing a crunch on our budget that is of great concern to the citizens of Lincoln. One of the big concerns I have about this bill is that we have to understand any piece of legislation must incorporate the different perspectives of 900 some different school districts and one in particular is, that I have a great concern about, is Lincoln since that is the area I represent and so I'm here to share with you the concerns of that particular district among the 900. We all have in all of our legislative districts different district concerns that we're trying to bring to this floor to try to amend the bill to deal with those concerns and build a package that reflects a consensus across the state. So I can understand why Senator Withem or Senator Moore are not favorable to seeing this amendment adopted, but I certainly feel that without it there is great concern in the City of Lincoln for the impacts of this legislation because of the unique situation here. Although it's not particularly unique, there are other school districts who are experiencing growth as we are, but that growth has to have a response and that means additional spending to meet the needs that we're finding and the growth that we're experiencing. We have a good school system in Lincoln. Obviously it could always be better. We feel that way about the whole State of Nebraska, a good school system, one that could be improved though, but still a good school system. And we're proud of our school system in Lincoln. We simply don't want to see it diminished by legislation that is well-intentioned and perhaps, certainly on a statewide basis, very laudable. But if its impacts on our city are negative, then obviously we have to be very concerned, and right now with the current status of the bill, it would have a negative impact on our city and our school system, so we are asking your support, recognizing it is not just Lincoln's