

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Yes, Madam Chair and members of the body, I filed a motion notwithstanding the committee's recommendation to move LB 699 out of committee to the floor for the body's examination and thoughtful consideration. In all due respect to the Education Committee, especially in terms of, and I do respect them and considering what I've done to them in the last week with a couple of my other noncontroversial and low profile bills, that I think that the ideas in this bill deserve our consideration on the floor. When it was first killed I thought, well, maybe we'll wait until next year and try again, but I have decided since then that the ideas in this bill are extremely timely and extremely significant and worthy of debate by all of us. I also am hoping that we can pull this bill out of committee because I strongly suspect that one of the major reasons why it was killed in committee was because several committee members had concerns about the way I was proposing we fund the ideas in LB 699. LB 699 is a response to the need in Nebraska to try and address quality in education. Last year when we were struggling with 1059 I heard a lot of grumbling about how 1059 was not addressing quality in education, that we were going to put more money into it, but we weren't going to be assured that we were going to get better education. Most of us recognized that that was not the purpose of 1059, but it is time now to start talking about how do we get at that issue of quality in education? Some would say that we don't know what quality education is and we don't know how to get at it, but I would suggest to you that we've had lots of studies both at the national, state and local level that have reached a consensus about what quality education is and how we can accomplish it. In the State of Nebraska, we had a Governor's task force looking at excellence in education and we've had the Center for Excellence in Education prepare their report decade of change and we've had various chambers of commerce taking a serious look at what quality education is about and they all have come up with a remarkable consensus and I'm passing out to the body a chart that reflects many of the ideas that we have agreed upon reflect quality education. And I have attempted to take many of these concepts and incorporate them in LB 699. We do know what we should do, but it's going to be tough doing it. It's going to take innovative thinking, it's going to take some risk taking and it's going to take some commitment of time and energy and it's also going to take some venture capital. Just as a business needs some money up front to get started, or to restructure in order to be more efficient, school districts need the same kind of venture capital. LB 699 proposes to do this by