

and up front with you all with his description of the legislation. He hasn't hedged on one item. He has told you exactly, you know, what you should know concerning the funding of it, and one of the questions that I think Senator Kristensen had had to do with how could one private company make the line viable when the big corporate entity, itself, could not? And these are the same questions that I am asked everyday from my constituents, and I have told my constituents, repeatedly, that I am not interested in Nebraska becoming an owner of a railroad, but I do think that there is a possibility that we might be able to provide some funding that would have to be paid back, of course, by anybody who would lease this line. One of the things I think that happens with private ownership of these railroads is that they can make contracts with the potential shippers or receivers, make contracts with them that are much more desirable, than can the corporate roads, and there is a number of reasons for that. One of them is that they have a more one-on-one contact with them, and the other is that they are not dealing with somebody from Chicago, for instance, anymore, they are dealing with somebody from Nebraska with whom they can be more comfortable. So I think there is many things that will go into making this short line more profitable. We have heard from I think five now potential buyers, and they have done just exactly this. They have taken these lines that are in trouble that they think still have some viability and they have made successful business ventures from them. These are people who we are talking to have already done this. They know what can happen. They've studied what goes on in the Chicago-Northwestern, so they know they can make this a viable road. I don't have any problem at all supporting this legislation. I would have a problem if Nebraska became an owner, but the way we are doing it right now, I think it is very necessary, and I think it is doing great things for our state, as a whole. So I would urge that you support this legislation and help us bring it on over to Select File. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Before I go to the next speaker, Senator Lamb, I am going to announce some guests of Senator Horgan. They are in the south balcony. We have 60 fourth graders from the Cottonwood Elementary in Omaha and their teachers. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being with us. Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I punched my light on when Senator Moore indicated he'd like to ask some