

**SPEAKER BAACK:** Time. Senator Landis, did you wish to discuss the Dierks amendment? Senator Landis. Senator Horgan, the Dierks amendment.

**SENATOR HORGAN:** Yes, Mr. Speaker and members, I would rise in opposition to Senator Dierks' amendment. I am concerned about the fact that with sunseting this piece of legislation, what, indeed, will happen in two years is what's happened here today. Two years ago, we said teachers' salaries were too low, and we moved teachers' salaries from 42nd lowest in the nation to 38th lowest in the nation with \$20 million. Today, we are talking about \$15 million. We sunset this legislation in two years, I dare say in two years we will be talking about maybe giving them \$10 million. I think some of the things...statements that have been made about ACT scores, and performance in our schools are misleading, and they get us off the topic of what this bill is really supposed to do. This bill is to enhance teachers' salaries, to encourage good teachers to stay in education, to encourage young people to consider education as a career. If you look at the United States 20 years ago, in the early 1960s, who took ACT scores or tests, and who were ranked in those scores? They were the 20 percent of the students who went on to college. Today, with the baby boom generation gone, there is a significant reduction in the number of high school seniors, yet our colleges in Nebraska are either stable or rising in their enrollments. Why is that? It is because more and more children are going on to college. Well over 50 percent of all high school graduates now go on to college in this country. More and more students are taking the ACT scores. If you compare the scores to the early fifties when only the top 10 percent of a classroom would take those tests and compare it to the classroom today, where probably 60, 70, 80 percent of the students are taking that same test, the scores have gone down immeasurably. It is also...we have talked about tenure, and that we don't get rid of our bad teachers. Well, I can tell you, I was on the Omaha School Board for two years and we went through a lot of hell when we tried to get rid of teachers, but we got rid of at least five teachers that the school board fired when I was on that board for two years. And the school administrators, themselves, got rid of others. It is inaccurate to say that we don't weed out bad teachers because they do get weeded out. And we talk about teachers are not educating kids today. Several years ago, there was a survey, in the early sixties, about what were the top seven problems teachers had to deal with in the