

thank...first of all thank Senator Robinson for bringing up the NCAA in his beginnings of the discussion, giving Senator Chambers an opportunity to...to speak at this point. Would also like to thank Senators Nelson, Dierks, Moore, for their supportive remarks, and Senator Abboud started making some very excellent remarks, and when he got to the 1059 part, it kind of lost a little bit of its effect, but then he finished strong, so appreciate Senator Abboud's remarks also. I do think that the next thing that this Legislature really needs to do to improve education is grab ahold of the accountability issue so that we can set the standards and provide meaningful assessment of our students. One of the big problems we have in Nebraska is we really don't know, we go on a lot of anecdotal information, that one school claims it's better than the other one because they'll hold up their student handbook, talking about all the different courses that they offer. But we on the state level don't know if students are getting...getting a decent...decent education out of those. On the other hand, we have another school say all of our students are A students, but we don't really know what an A means in that building. We really mean...in order to...Senator Abboud was 100 percent correct. In order to target any future funds we give to education, to the areas that need it, we need to know what those areas are. So I think this is a...although hopefully it has not become a controversial bill, is an incredibly important bill, and I would urge support of the body of the committee amendments.

SPEAKER BAACK: You have heard Senator Withem's closing on the amendment. We will now proceed to vote on that amendment. Ding. Ding, I said. That's the bell. The bell doesn't work, so we're dinging. Have you all voted? Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of Senator Withem's amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: The amendment is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BAACK: We are now on discussion of the bill as amended. Is there anyone wishing to discuss the bill as amended? Seeing no one, Senator Withem, do you wish to close on the advancement of LB 245.

SENATOR WITHEM: I would merge the...merge the advancement of