

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. A number of years ago, when LB 89 was before us, I recall a significant amount of debate on the great and laudable goals of increasing the beginning teachers salaries to encourage people to enter the field of K-12 education as a profession for their life. And the division of those monies, after they were appropriated, became an item of local negotiation. Had a relative who was a long time teacher, who was a member of a local negotiating team, who believed in what 89 was promoted to do, was almost blackballed by the rest of his negotiating session because the rest wanted it to be distributed to those who were already in the system, and only a small portion to go to those who were in the beginning stages of their career, or to encourage the entrance into the field of teaching by people. Rare was the district in the State of Nebraska where the stated intent was followed. Now we find ourselves in a situation today where, in order to keep up a program that probably has quite a lot of value, we have again turned, and something that's fairly unique, not unique in the effort but unique in the success, in funding a portion of the educational costs through the Highway Trust Fund. I asked Senator Robinson, earlier today, how many hours out of a day, across the State of Nebraska, that he would guess that students and teachers spent upon the highways of Nebraska. Senator Robinson said he could answer it in two words, too blank much. Quality highways are as integral a part of education in a sparsely populated state, like Nebraska, as anything else we do. We're now going to fund part of the teachers salary, bonus program, which is a program with a great deal of merit, from a variable rate gas tax. I think that system, if you don't understand by now, you will not understand because it has been explained quite adequately by Senator Warner and Senator Moore. I believe it's the will of the body to start down this road. But when the routes that our school buses run on, whether they're out in the country picking up children, or whether they're taking urban children to extra curricular activities, sports or otherwise, are not in the...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR COORDSEN: ...safe condition that you want them to be, please take the blame on yourself. This is not the way to fund the program, it's the way, I believe, that it will be funded unless this bill isn't advanced at this stage of debate. Great deal of three weeks of effort went into property tax, debate