

that if there are better ways of doing this than we now have in this bill, we will listen to them. The proviso is they need to bring strength to the bill and not subtract strength from the bill. The one thing hasn't been mentioned here, other than Senator Robinson just touched on it a little bit in the end of his remarks in regard to looking at other ways of paying teachers, as if that's an issue that's never been brought up on the floor of the Legislature before, because NSEA won't let us do it. Senator Robinson, LB 91, if you recall, has a performance based portion to it. And one of the reasons, one of the many reasons...I agree with everything that Senators Rasmussen and Bernard-Stevens and others have said about the values of LB 91 and why we need to pay teachers more, but the one thing that hasn't been talked about enough is that we, as a Legislature, last year, you know, fought pretty hard with NSEA to get contained in LB 91 a performance based portion of teacher pay. We enacted that. The catch was we said any dollars over 15 million will be dedicated to performance base. Now performance base doesn't mean merit necessarily, it means other sorts of things that are done to reward teachers for their performance. It can be additional work. It can be other sorts of things, and we included that. But it only kicks in after we appropriate \$15 million. So after bleeding on the floor of the Legislature to get that enacted, we then saw a bill pass that only had \$15 million appropriation the first year and then \$8 million vetoed out so we're down at \$7 million for the second year. If we don't find other sources of revenue, that performance based method of paying teachers is going to be just one more thing put on the bone yard of the education reform that we all do such a great job here in the Legislature of passing but then when it comes time to funding it, we don't fund it. The next most recent example would be the early childhood education program. We fought hard on the floor of this Legislature, fighting off opposition. We passed an early childhood education program, funding for it got vetoed out last year. You go back to LB 994, passed back in the early 1980s, Nebraska's answer to education reform, fought long and hard passing that legislation. When it came time to fund it we didn't fund it. What I'm going to ask my staff to do is go back through the last ten to 12 years of education reform in Nebraska to find out how many education reform programs we have passed and how few of those have actually been funded. You know, we've done a lot of big things, a lot of good things. Affiliation, we've done. We've done 1059 and we've done choice. Those are big things, but, by and large, they were not funding ticket