

not...and at least make it \$1.7 million easier next year, I think this is a program that has, as I argued earlier, has well, well gone beyond its original purpose, a \$45,000 program that's run amuck, and certainly with the...the other major point I would make now and then let it...the debate go on, if there is any substantial debate, would just be to say that this program was implemented before 1059, before the incredible infusion of state aid into the system. Most districts that receive equalization aid will be able to make up any loss, if any, that they get in this program. As I've said before and as others have said on this floor, early childhood education, domestic violence and other programs that are in the budget we have felt all along during the appropriations process need this protection and, even more than that, next year as we look at the absolute necessity of budget cuts, I think this is an opportunity for the body to send a message that the cuts should start now and, with that, I would urge the adoption of this amendment.

SENATOR CONWAY: Thank you, Senator Ashford. First speaker is Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, here again we have a fairness issue. We have school districts educating foster care children that they haven't asked to educate. A lot of times those children are special ed students. They're students that move in and out. They can be more of a disciplinary problem than other students. I don't think Senator Ashford's amendment is a fair amendment. I think the schools that are asked or required to educate these foster care children, and a lot of time these foster care homes lie in clusters and if you're in Overton, Nebraska, and you've got five foster care children in your district and the state is not going to reimburse you for educating them, that's a burden. That's a tough burden. So I would rise to oppose the Ashford amendment and ask the body to do likewise.

SENATOR CONWAY: Thank you, Senator Schrock. I will recognize Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the body, I would like to challenge the germaneness of this amendment. I don't think it has anything to do with LB 719. I'd like to have a ruling from the Chair.

SENATOR CONWAY: Senator Ashford, would you like to respond?