

April 9, 1992

LB 245, 573

voting, 5 excused and not voting, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BAACK: LB 573 passes. We'll go to LB 245E.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have a motion on the desk. Senator Withem would move to return the bill for specific amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Withem.

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. Give Patrick a little bit of a break here from reading, and let me just talk a little bit about 245. I can remember two or three years ago I had a bill dealing with school accountability that we'd heard a lot of criticism from individuals out in districts without a lot of focus, and led a lot of members of the body to have enough questions about the bill that they were not supportive on Final Reading. The bill did pass, but it was ultimately vetoed. So I don't want to make the mistake of not clarifying some points for those of you who may still have concerns. I know I talked to a lot of members of the body, and frankly, I appreciate very much your confidence in this measure, when I'm able to correct some of the misinterpretations that you've heard from some individuals within the state. But I want to make one last record of what the bill does, what the bill does not do, and other items for your consideration. And also, hopefully, hopefully, direction for the commission so, if for some crazy reason the Governor would appoint a group of people to this commission that would want to take it in a direction where the bill does not intend, we would establish this record of what this bill is to do, and what it is not to do. First of all, what it is not, because I know a lot of the phone calls you have received bring up something called the NAEP test, that's the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, it's a...it's a federal project that's been going on for a number of years. Some individuals that have seen the NAEP test have concerns that some of the questions that are asked on this go beyond academics and into the realm of values and attitudes. I've read some of the NAEP questions, I don't share that concern, necessarily. But that is really irrelevant because this bill does not establish the NAEP test for Nebraska. The facts are Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education tomorrow, if they'd want to, without LB 245, could mandate the NAEP test, they have the power to mandate a standardized test within the state, they already have that power, they've chosen not to exercise it. This does not