

February 14, 1995 LB 401

would now be combined into one report. So we cut down from two down to one the annual reports required. We do allow greater flexibility in that block grant program than we had in the past, a little more flexibility for the commission to move forward on that. We do talk about the voluntary accreditation process and clarify some things in that, that we had in place, that we passed in '91. We do talk about those school age programs. The only issue that came up was the question about the private schools and the committee amendments took care of that. And then finally we talk about...well the purpose of why we license or regulate child care in the State of Nebraska, and the two reasons we have are to protect the children and to allow parents to have informed decisions regarding child care. And that's really, that's really what the bill does. And so I'd be happy to answer any questions, but I'd ask support for the advancement of LB 401.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. The Chair recognizes Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Madam Chairman, senators, what I...would Senator Wesely yield to a few questions on this bill?

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator W ally.

SENATOR WESELY: Sure.

SENATOR WITFK: It says that this bill would require the Department of Education to establish a voluntary accreditation program for early childhood education. Why...if it's a voluntary accreditation program, what...what would...what would make the people want to be accredited early childhood education?

SENATOR WESELY: You know, we've talked...we've had something in the original bill we passed in '91, and the idea is to designate individuals that have kind of gone above and beyond the minimum standards. So they voluntarily decide to meet a higher training level, for instance, maybe have a little higher quality of program, maybe some of the classes that they provide within the day care setting or something, so...

SENATOR WITEK: And would those be...would only accredited childhood programs be considered for block grants through these people?