

probably very cheaply, once it was established, to a multitude of different people, other than the public schools, and that certainly should have been done, and I would like to work with him maybe on some corrective language that would allow at least authorizing language to allow that to take place. The second point I would like to make is in response to some of the things Senator Witek indicated and Senator Janssen indicated, the purpose of the lottery was not simply to distribute money, it was not for property tax relief. Keep in mind, I did Chair the Education Committee for the seven years or so of the ten or twelve years of the era of school reform after the Nation at Risk report came out, in which...I think that was in the mid-1980s, early 1980s perhaps, in which Blue Ribbon Commission at the national level really did point out the failings of the education system in our country and issued a challenge to states and to public school people all across the country to improve their educational systems. We in Nebraska did a lot of legislating. Some of it might have been good, some of it might have been bad. We increased standards. We empowered school districts to do things. We threw out challenges to school districts. During that process though we did not come up with any additional money for local school districts to improve education. We didn't do that until we passed the lottery bill. The lottery bill was not simply to provide money replacement of other funds. It was to provide an additional pot of money for school districts to make improvements. This bill, I think it's kind of interesting from Senator Robinson and Senator Witek who usually argue on the other side of this issue. They would usually be ones talking about we at the state level should not be dictating to local governments what they should be doing. That's what this bill does. Right now under the lottery provision any school district that can put together a plan for improvement can make a decision at the local level what fits best for them and make that application and if it is one of the better grants, Senator Janssen, you're probably right about grantsmanship and that might be a problem in the current system, but still the system says if the local school people have an idea that they decided is best for them, they can come forward. What we're saying by this bill is you don't know that at the local level. You don't know what's good for you. What we know in Lincoln that is best for you is Internet connection so we're going to take this money that you used to be able to compete for, for your very good ideas, and we are going to only give that money or a portion of that money in the area of grants which gets to a question that something on the committee