

welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber. Roll call, please...senators, please record your presence.

CLERK: I have a quorum present, Madam President.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you. You have some items for the record?

CLERK: Madam President, Legislative Program Evaluation Committee reports LB 886, General File with amendments; LB 450, indefinitely postponed. And Enrollment and Review reports LB 572, LB 514, LB 669, LB 499 to Select File, some having Enrollment and Review amendments attached. That's all that I have, Madam President. (See pages 1730-31 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you. We're on LB 742, on the amendment to the committee amendments from Senator McKenzie. Mr. Clerk, is there anything else? I should just go ahead? Senator Bernard-Stevens, your light is next on the McKenzie amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Just a couple of comments on the amendment that we have before us. A little, I guess, more for the record and maybe so the body knows a little bit more about the process of how this amendment came to us today. It really has been quite a long and involved process. You had a task force that was meeting over the last couple of years and actually one of their recommendations for pilot projects and block grants came to us this year in the bill 623, it opened up the public hearing. And we had a good discussion and a broad-based discussion on the concept of block grants and what should go into it and what we'd want to test and do. And while that is going on we also had a meeting where many of us, Senator McKenzie, Senator Bohlke, myself, the legal counsel from the Education Committee and others, Senator Wickersham, were down into a Conference of the States at NCSL and we brought together, at that point, some of the best minds in the areas of special education, nationally, some of the best people that were involved in special education, trying to make the best impact for students identified with special needs, as long (sic) as trying to get a handle on the concepts of cost-control, and even the concept of controlling the costs more so it goes into the program rather than in some of the other areas. And that's where Senator Hartnett's question on where the increased costs are coming from, I think, was so pertinent to the question. We met with people, we looked