

funds and to keep the funds revolving and helping us into the future rather than just making it a \$14 million one-time shot. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Before we continue further, Senator Wesely has 55 fifth graders with us today as guests, in the north balcony. They're from Meadow Lane Elementary with their teachers and staff. Like to welcome you to the Legislature today. Senator Robinson.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I like the term Senator Beutler uses, flushed down. I wonder if all the money...each year we give a lot of money to the university. Is that flushed down? We...we...hi, Don. Lincoln Senator, turn around. We...we give money every day, is that flushed down? I don't think this money would be flushed down. Are you saying we're flushing down by helping the youngsters of this state? I disagree with that, I think it's a bad term. Besides, if it was a loan program it would be a continued bureaucracy like we've had. Would it go to...it's 200,000 now, is it going to go up? We could use that for the benefit of young children in the State of Nebraska. I urge you to oppose the Beutler amendment.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Robinson. Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President. I'll try to be brief. I think we discussed the idea of whether this should be a loan program, or grant program before. I will reiterate that I believe it is more appropriate to have it as a loan program, it would provide continuing benefits into the future if we make this into a loan program. I don't expect the Internet technology to be static, anymore than I expected energy conservation to be a static program. And I assume that that was one of the considerations in making that from...changing that from a grant to a loan program. I think we're going to be asked to continue to put money into this program if we make it a grant program because technology will change. There will be new computers, new switches, new everything and we'll be asked to fund those as well. We won't have any way of determining how those things should be prioritized, how they should be distributed, how they should be handled. I recognize that a grant doesn't give...gives greater advantages perhaps to local schools and loans, but it does cause a local examination of the program and how it's going to fit within their operations, and I