

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Madam President and members. I feel like this is... I'm making a speech that I made in 1989, I'm sure. When LB 567 was passed, I just give you this as some historic... some history of the early childhood education legislation. One of the things that was brought to me as an emphasis to support the bill were several telling points about the Head Start Program that started back in the sixties. And the thing that impressed me the most was that those young... those little ones who had had the benefit of the Head Start Program, that was a very comparatively small program to start with, the federal program, in certain areas across the United States. Several things that I thought were significant, a high percentage of children who had had the benefit of the Head Start finished high school. Another significant number went on to higher education and they were not in jail, Senator Chambers, they were not in jail, remember? The reason that that was all brought out was because these were minorities and low-income families that had the benefit of Head Start and, as compared to their peers who did not have the benefit of the Head Start, those... those three things were significant so, for that reason, just to start with, I thought it was a good piece of legislation for Nebraska to take some leadership in trying to help the schools across the state to understand what early childhood education is for and so that preschoolers do learn at the day cares or wherever they are, instead of... When you look at day care, in 1988, I went to a forum, a seminar or a workshop here in Lincoln. They thought maybe about 30 people would come. A hundred and twenty-five showed up. A hundred and twenty-five people from business, everywhere in Lincoln because day care, little by little, was becoming a given. So many more women work outside the home you have to have day care. And there are men who are left with children. I know one doctor here whose wife died in child birth. He had two children that he had to find day care for. So the point of that workshop came through loud and clear that we did need day care. We need after-school care for kids that so they aren't going home alone. We need all kinds of things and that was why I... the big reason that I... I supported early childhood education. The other point about day care is you can't take a bunch of little ones, no matter what age, toss them in a room and say, play, kids, and let it go at that. You have to organize it. It's just like anything else. You organize it at home. You don't just put your children in a room and say, have fun. You have to be sure they are doing something worthwhile or taking a little nap or just sitting and staring into space, but you want to be really