

happened nationally with the original act for children with disabilities. But the problem is not just about what we do when we verify, it is about the fact that in order to get any money in the State of Nebraska, you have to wear a label in special education. And what I found interesting about carrying this bill was ten years ago when I was still in general education, we went through this huge reform effort in grouping children by ability. Because of research related to special education and tracking that said children who got labeled for special education ended up in a classroom where that person had lower expectations and the teacher had lower expectations. Everyone expected less of that child because of the label, and yet you can't get money in the state to provide services or to facilitate and help that child's learning process unless you get the label. That's a lot of why we are driven by the need to verify, why we have for years attached money to the label that then went to the child. Even the federal government is reexamining their position on whether or not you have to be labeled. And the reason they did that was not to say you have...we have to say that you are a child with a handicap, but to be able to track which children were in which categories. The second thing I want to argue is that the discussion about policy in Nebraska, because we've used this approach has been less about what has been good for kids than it has been about how we get extra money, and that extra money, in many cases, has created a system that has absolutely nothing to do with general education. We have a system over here that is there when I, as a teacher, can't handle this child because they have a behavior problem, because they have a very short attention span and they seem to be moving all the time and they are bored with my teaching technique, that by November of the year I go to the special education teacher and say, whew, we have got to do something about Johnnie over here, or about Sally. They have got to have something to help them or to help me handle them in the classroom. Those attitudes that we have developed over 20 years, I will say, unfortunately so, is also what drives...are also what drives what has happened. Two separate systems, I made this argument on General File; two separate systems, two systems that get funded in completely different ways, one, where we get X number of dollars through property tax, and, one, where we get 90 percent of what we spend, somewhere between 60 and 90, back from the state a year later, and we put in our 90...our 10 percent. Now if this is about policy and if this is about quality for children with some handicapping condition, then the argument has to also be about