

for too long we've just dumped it on the schools and said teach them to do all things and we expect all of these good things to happen. And, as budget cuts are coming, and they have come on our school systems, they have not been able to adjust properly. They have not been able to reduce in all of the areas. They still try to maintain all things to all entities; even today some school systems are arguing whether to add soccer to the program, or add baseball to the program, and we're talking about areas that...and not just to pick on sports, just those two that came to mind, we're talking about schools...trying to get a philosophy where, as we reduce the cost of education, we also have to emphasize the academic portion of that. And I believe at some point we're...we're very close to the point where there is going to be a major funding philosophy change in our schools based upon and it will come about by fiscal pressures, that they will simply have to make those decisions. So, as an individual, I, personally, support most of all that you said. As a senator, however, I would have...if it would come to a vote, I would have to vote no.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Before continuing, Senator Brown has as her guests in the north balcony some of the people we're talking about right now, 33 fourth graders from Underwood Hill Elementary School in Omaha. With them is their sponsor. Would you all please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Thank you. Thank you for being with us. Senator Will, on the McKenzie amendment.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body, I will be brief since it appears that the amendment will be withdrawn. But I will rise in support of the amendment even as a state senator because I think we've started down the road of managing these entities anyway by the very bill itself, which is talking about spending and levy limitations. And I think, certainly, the least we can do is...would be to include something like this which would simply state legislative intent, that we recognize what the basic function of a school system is and that is to provide education to a child and activities for those children. They are the focus of the school district, or at least they should be, and I would see no harm at all in including something like this in the bill. This is, in fact, I would applaud Senator McKenzie for bringing this. If she does bring this to a vote, I certainly will be supporting it.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Will. Senator Brown.