

February 5, 1996 LB 754

Senator Bernard-Stevens brings up a good point certainly, and we anticipated, at least I anticipated this, why don't, you know, we have all teachers submit to this extensive background check. And, frankly, this is...will take care of that eventually. This is what, over the history of the legislation, this is what all parties have finally agreed to. This is the legislation that can pass, this is why we're doing it. As far as...frankly, if I was...if I put a...imagined myself as a...as an educator and I had been teaching for 20 years, I would think it would be very offensive to have someone come and do the background check on me, if you wanted to renew your certificate and so forth. You know, I'd been teaching, for instance let's say in the Omaha Public School system for 20 years and they're coming back and they're questioning my integrity, I would be offended at that, and I could certainly understand why educators in general would be resistant to that. This focuses on new teachers, new people coming into this state. And my...and, again, my response to the question was that eventually, certainly we would have them, all educators would have a background check, either from Nebraska, or from outside the state. This is what this legislation provides, this is the first step, this is what the parties agree to, this is good legislation, this is for new individuals, this enhances the professionalism, it safeguards our children, and I would urge you to adopt the committee amendments. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Hilgert. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Crosby. In listening to the debate I, too, have to tell you, Senator Bernard-Stevens, I am ashamed of this bill. I'm ashamed that we have to live in a society where these kinds of things are necessary. But the truth of the matter of it is, are we going to...are we going to turn our back and say we're not going to do anything? I have read of instances, as many of you have, about events that have happened by teachers who have come in, who have had problems elsewhere and decide to move away from the state they're in and start over new, and sometimes they're able to escape the problems that they had. But I still feel that we need to, in this society we live in today we need to do these kinds of checks to find out for sure that our children are not being subjected to the kind of abuse that we certainly understand happens. So, Senator Bernard-Stevens, I am ashamed too. I'm ashamed of the fact that we need to pass the kind of legislation because our society is demanding it. Our society has gotten to