

February 21, 1996 LB 1205

everyone's motivation here is to do what's best for the kids, and that's what we're trying to grapple with, to a great extent. I think it is not insignificant, however, that we have an agency that is out of any oversight on our part that continues to grow, to increase expenses and salaries at a rate greater than we can do in other parts of state government. And I just think that's contrary to the best interests of the school kids, as well as citizens of Nebraska. I want to maybe mention something else, I guess. I'm under the impression that the partnership project that is being proposed, the consolidation of agencies, will occur December 1 of '96. We're doing that before we come back in '97 and work out the details. We've made a decision, we're going to make a decision perhaps to consolidate those agencies and worry about the details later. But from a philosophical standpoint, a policy standpoint, we're going to do that. Now what we're asking the body to do here is much less, I think, as far as the stretch in policy is concerned. We're simply requiring the Board of Educational Lands and Funds to develop the plan. They're the people that know how long their leases run, how long the leases in each county run so that they can develop the sale...take into account when the leases end and that sort of thing, and come back to the Educational Committee with a plan. If there are big problems with it, we will proceed with further legislation. We don't need this amendment. I don't think that it's...that it will do anything except require another bill to be introduced. So, again, I would urge the body to defeat the amendment. As far as being worried about driving the price of land down with a fire sale, that's exactly why we have structured the bill the way we have, so that it's done within the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board of Educational Lands and Funds, which are constitutional responsibilities. Appraisals will be had before a sale occurs, and it will have to bring at least the appraised value. And that is...that's the way the bill is structured, so I'd urge the body again to defeat this amendment and we'll move on to other amendments on the bill. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Bromm. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Senator Crosby and members of the Legislature. I stand in opposition of Senator Withem's amendment. But I do want to thank Senator Withem for the concern that he has had for children throughout the years. I don't want to be redundant, but I believe that we must put an