

we have in place. And so I hope we can seriously discuss it. Senator Brown had a amendment adopted talking about the fact that our students should come first and our education should come first with budget cuts under the budget limits proposed under this bill. She talked about cutting first extracurricular activities, student transportation, school building and ground maintenance. And what I'd like to add is that we need to talk about administrative overhead. We need to talk about the bureaucracy of our school system. We have got 668, 668 school districts in this state. And if you look at the handout that I've given to you, it will indicate that out of those 668 school districts, 499 of them have fewer than 300 students; 374 of the 378 Class I school districts have fewer than 300 students. So most of those districts that are fewer than 300 students are in our Class I districts. What this amendment calls for is that there shall be no school district in the state of Nebraska with fewer than 300 students after the year 2000; that we require that our schools, through the county reorganization committees and through the state reorganization committee, to begin developing plans for reorganizing our school system, and that by the year 2000 our school districts will have a minimum of 300 students, that they be K through 12, that they follow county lines or appropriate and transportation routes and attempt to have some contiguous nature to them with the intent that they will then be able to operate with the least cost administratively possible. When we talk about budget cuts, when we talk about levy caps, the first thing that ought to go is unneeded, duplicative bureaucracy. That is what I think we are trying to do with LB 1044, that's what we're trying to do in other areas in the state, that's what we need to do with our schools; that we have got a system that grew up in a time when we could not travel very far and very fast, but those days are gone and we are able to travel and get to school in a quicker fashion than in the days when this state was first formed. But we also have to recognize there is a limit to how much travel we can make to our schools. So this amendment also calls for schools to not be closed if it would require students to travel more than 15 miles to an elementary school. So we do protect the actual schools when the districts are consolidated. And we also do allow that within the 15 miles, that a school will not be closed if its cost is less than 10 percent over the average cost per student. So that if keeping a school open does not increase the overall cost to the district, it will be kept open, and for sure if it's over 15 miles to go for students to get to