

make some advancements in the structure of government. But long term I see this as heading us off in the direction I will not, for one, want to support. I think long term the sort of cuts that will result from this and the deterioration of our school system will harm the quality of life in our state. You might have seen the recent article that indicated I think we were third or fourth in the country in the quality of life that we have by a recent survey. We should think more about that in our state. We should be proud of what Nebraska offers to our citizens--our good schools, our good services, our good quality of life that we have here. And it doesn't happen by accident. It takes an investment. It takes an effort by our citizens, by our taxpayers, by our public officials, by our public employees, by our private sector. All have to work together to achieve the quality of life that we have in our state. And, again, in my view, the strategy that we have here...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...is preferable to the limits and petition drives that would be proposed for our constitution and it is on that basis that I stand in support of these, but I do think that as the public becomes more informed of the consequences of these bills, whether it be the school consolidation effort that I talked about earlier, or the reorganization of government that we talked about, or the loss of services that are being contemplated, as the public becomes more informed about the actual results of what we're talking about, we have a broad-brush approach here but when we get to the specifics and people see those specifics I think they will reconsider whether or not this is what they ultimately want to see happen to our state. And so it is my hope that these bills will help educate the public. They will become knowledgeable and they will respond and give guidance to this Legislature to reconsider or redirect some of the things we're talking about today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I'll just take a couple minutes. Number of calls I've had are in the line of what's been discussed and that is what kind of an effect is this going to have actually on the future of our educational system in Nebraska. My response to those people who