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families that they serve, and I applaud you in that effort. However, with all that you have accomplished, we would be less than candid if we did not acknowledge that there are a couple of areas that still demand our attention, debate, deliberation, and our action. Our state's school finance formula is complicated. Frankly, to accomplish the public policy objectives that should be accomplished it has to be complex. But just because the formula is complex shouldn't mean it has to lack in stability and predictability. Recently, a group of school officials came to talk to me. Before they left my office I asked them, if they could choose between increased state aid or predictability in the formula's outcomes what would be their preference. Their answer was predictability, and that should be our goal. Accordingly, we must agree to improve stability and move away from the annual changes to the mechanics of the formula which serve to make the system even less predictable. The second thought I offer in the area of school finance is that I believe there is a better way to find property tax relief than increasing state aid to local school districts. We were all disappointed by the property tax figures that were recently released. The hope was that your efforts, coupled with efforts by local elected officials, would have resulted in property tax relief of somewhere between 8 and 15 percent. The reality is that property tax relief statewide was less than 5 percent and, for many Nebraskans, either significantly less or none at all. Following all the hard work of the Legislature in recent years to boost aid to local governments in the hope of reducing the property tax burden, the average property taxpayer in Nebraska did not see nearly the amount of relief the Legislature had hoped to provide. Attempting to provide property tax relief through state aid to local governments is simply not an effective method of providing property tax relief. Higher valuations and the bureaucracy of local government eat up many of the dollars that this Legislature had hoped would provide that property tax relief. Therefore, today I respectfully submit to you a plan. The plan I propose recognizes the state's responsibility for funding K-12 education and for providing property tax relief. We do not have to leave our schools without the necessary resources to educate our children. A unified package of legislation that maintains spending at the levels I have suggested, stabilizes state aid, provides direct property tax relief, and includes Senator Brown's legislation on