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LB 149

of our student/teacher ratios and in some of our larger schools I know we're looking at even reducing the number of students per teacher. Also, as we look at our economy, our economy has been expanding and education and other service workers are looking at receiving their fair share of that growth, and it's particularly difficult and we've been alerted to the needs that might continually arise in education as far as teachers; that competition force of what they could start out a beginning salary in teaching compared to industry makes this whole area very, very difficult. So, again, getting back to the amendment, I oppose the amendment particularly for the budgeting concerns that it would create. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator. Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, Senator Stuhr talked about the budgeting concerns and Senator Bohlke talked about school districts having one less month to plan, but let's remember what got us to the position that we're in of needing to have LB 149. The AFRs, the annual financial reports, that come from the schools, come in at the end of November, and so by have...by when we set the certification date till December 1, there was no time to process that information so we were using estimated information. And so, therefore, we had to do the respin in order to incorporate the actual data from the school districts. I believe that for the purposes of budgeting, having accurate information is just as important as having enough time, possibly more important, and we would not be in the position that we're in with LB 149, at least with one aspect of LB 149, had it not...had we not set the date, the certification date, to December 1 when we did not have enough time to process the actual financial data. I believe that it is in the best interest of school boards and school administrators that the information that we give them is accurate and I think that rather than looking at this amendment as one less month for them to use in their contract negotiations, in their planning, it's one more month for us to be more assured that we are...what we are saying is going to actually be accurate. And it is...it is going to be cutting it a little close for the school districts, but we will not, hopefully, in the future, if we adopt this amendment, have a situation like we have right now where we're having to go back and fix a problem that we