

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

March 9, 1999

LB 386

this time, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Bohlke, you're recognized to open on LB 386.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President, members. LB 386 is an issue that we have had some discussion before on the floor concerning how we fund educational service units, and most important, the technical infrastructure services for the ESUs. At the beginning, I would like to thank Senator Price for prioritizing this bill because it is important. It is very important to the ESUs, and in a moment I will give her a few minutes of my opening time so that she may make her comments. In 1993, the Nebraska Unicameral gave Nebraska's ESUs the authority to raise tax levies not to exceed a half a cent to provide telecomputing resources to school districts. If you remember, during the discussion on 806, we also had funds dedicated to ESUs that we named technology as one area that would be following staff development. Technology would be the second priority for those ESUs. The confusion in some people's minds seemed to be the definition of the term "technology". In my mind, the way that I best separate it out is the fact that in those core services we're talking more of what I think about as software type issues. And today the half a cent, we're talking about...more about hardware issues. They are both necessary to deliver good technology in our schools, one just as important as the others. Because of an oversight in a previous bill having to do with limiting levy authority, today as we discuss this bill, ESUs have the authority to levy a half a cent. With this, they are saying that...with this bill we are saying that that half a cent will be made up with this bill and takes care of eliminating that half a cent levy authority. And so, with this what we are saying is we will continue our dedication to making sure that Nebraska leads in technology, and I tell you in the country we are a leader in the area of technology. The half a cent that we're talking about today on hardware issues are physical connections, like fiber, copper, satellite, wiring, servers and work stations, wide area network design and management, switches, operating systems, human resources necessary to maintain the infrastructure. As we travel across the state oftentimes on our interim studies, we continually have schools talk to us about the importance of the ESUs in the area